University of Alberta

Priest, From Screen to Stage:
A Dramaturgical Transposition of Jimmy McGovern's Screenplay

by

Lindsay Dale-Ann Bell

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

Department of Drama

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Dr. James McTeague, Supervisor

Dr. James DeFelice, Committee Member

DD Kugler, Committee Member

April 11, 1997

Date

To my Bacchus:

elen sila lumienn' omentilvo

All my love. L.

ABSTRACT

In May, 1996, Paul Gelineau and I obtained permission from Jimmy McGovern to write, workshop, and produce a stage adaptation of his screenplay, *Priest*. The intent of the project was to develop the adaptation specifically for the "New Play" production requirement of the MFA Directing program at the University of Alberta.

Throughout the writing, workshopping, and performance of this play, I have documented the dramaturgical decisions and challenges that were confronted in adapting *Priest* from the screen to the stage. The adaptation process involved three critical steps: the preliminary script, the rehearsal process, and the performance text. The significant dramaturgical decisions that were made at each stage have been categorized into three main areas: time and space, characterization, and visual imagery. The first chapter examines how matters of time and space were dealt with in the adaptation process. The following chapter looks at characterization, and notes how the characters were embellished or diminished from the original film to the stage adaptation. The third chapter discusses the visual imagery, or the principle patterns of images, that were incorporated into the play. Each chapter evaluates the choices made throughout the process as well as those made in the performance draft. Solutions and possible options for changes in future drafts are also included in the discussion in each chapter.

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INTRODUCTION

The enticing prospect of adapting a film to the stage, workshopping it and producing it, was presented to me by my colleague, Paul Gelineau. His fascination with the film, and especially with the characters, ignited a desire to adapt it for the stage for his "New Play" requirement for his MFA degree in Directing. Subsequently, permission to write and produce the adaptation was obtained from Jimmy McGovern and his agent, as an "*adaptation exercise only*." That was in May, 1996.

Paul Gelineau and I were in constant dialogue throughout the development of the script, as we discussed, in depth, the central issues and conflicts of the film and the adaptation, the concept of the adaptation, what we wanted to accomplish.

A reading of the first draft was held on October 7, 1996. The eighteen professional actors involved provided valuable and informative feedback. The primary concern was the intensity of the characters and their situations, as every scene was a crisis for someone. The justification for excluding Mary in the final scene was also discussed, which greatly affected the following drafts. From this reading and the feedback session with the actors, I was able to focus on the various problems with the script, and remedy certain unresolved elements. The changes that were prompted by the first reading were incorporated into the rehearsal draft.

The rehearsal process began in early January, 1997, with thirteen cast members. The development of the script continued as minor changes and fine-tunings were made on a daily basis. The actor's and the director's process of discovery played a significant role in the development of the performance draft, and it was through their efforts that many "writer" discoveries were made. Some elements from this period of the development process were immediately incorporated in the performance draft, others will surface in future drafts.

The performance of the adaptation was held on February 8 and 9, 1997, in the

Media Room, Department of Drama. For specific reference to the performance text, please see Appendix A. This remaining part of the process is an attempt to clarify how I dealt with and confronted the critical matters in the development of the adaptation from screen to stage.

The major considerations in the adaptation process concerned the culturally significant themes: the ethical and moral dilemmas, and the question of forgiveness and acceptance. The responsibility as a "playwright" dealing with these issues presented immediate challenges. Narrowing the scope of the original film elicited six central relationships and conflicts: Christianity versus the Church, Greg and Graham's relationship, Lisa's story, Greg and Matthew's relationship, Matthew and Naomi's relationship, and Greg's relationship with the community. Greg's struggle, however, surfaced as the single core element of these conflicts: Greg's conflict with himself and his relationship with the Church, as a (latent) homosexual priest. It is his function as a priest that affects or is consequently affected by the central relationships he has with Graham, Lisa, Matthew, Naomi, Mary, Phil, and the congregation. Greg is caught between his Christian duty and the laws and regulations of the church. But he is also caught in a web of consequences because of this disparity: i) he cannot help Lisa because he is bound by the Holy Sacrament of Penance and of the seal of confession, ii) he is unable to accept his sexuality in respect to his faith in God and the Church, iii) his relationship with Matthew is divided between two opposed interpretations of the word of God and the role of priests in society, iv) his initial judgement on Matthew and Naomi's relationship is later paralleled with the judgement that is cast upon himself when his homosexuality is publicized, and v) Greg's gradual acceptance of Matthew and Naomi's relationship, in turn, mirrors what he seeks from the congregation at the end of the play - forgiveness and acceptance.

This thesis is a documentation of the dramaturgical decisions and challenges confronted in adapting *Priest* from the screen to the stage. The significant choices that were made at each stage of the process are categorized into three main areas: time and space, characterization, and visual imagery. The first chapter examines how matters of

time and space were dealt with in the adaptation process. The following chapter looks at characterization, and notes how the characters were embellished or diminished from the original film to the adaptation for the stage. The third chapter discusses visual imagery - the principle patterns of images - that were integrated to enhance the theatricality of the adaptation. Each chapter evaluates the choices made throughout the process including those made in the production draft, and discusses options for changes in future drafts.

CHAPTER I

DRAMATURGICAL DECISIONS: TIME AND SPACE

What evolved from the original linear and chronological film was an adaptation that made time and space malleable and dissolved the boundaries that anchor each to a single dimension. The initial images and concept of the adaptation was non-linear and had a fluidity in the movement from one scene to the next which broke away from the traditional "three-act" structure. The non-linear theatrical conventions that were used in the adaptation convey multiple layers of both time and space. These conventions offered a closer look at certain moments, as well as to expressionistically explore Greg's perspective - thoughts, memories, nightmares. The conventions can be placed into five categories: (incomplete) circular structure, simultaneous presentations of two different times/spaces, "time warps," selective moments of a whole event, and blackouts.

The Prologue introduces a variation of the traditional circular structure by reversing the direction of the convention. Usually, a circular structure refers to a plot sequence that begins at point A, and loops back to point A in the final moment. In the Prologue however, the knowledge and experiences four characters acquire by the end of the play are brought into the opening scene of the play. Greg's ordination ceremony (the "beginning") is juxtaposed with the four characters with foreknowledge (Lisa, Graham, Mary and Phil: the "ending"). These four characters are the most affected by his role as priest - his ordination becomes the interconnecting element. The four characters are not actually "at" the ordination, but rather, they are symbolically present. The Prologue then, introduces the beginning and the end, the present and the future, which meet and share the same space. It should be noted that the foreknowledge of Lisa, Graham, Mary and Phil, was the director's interpretation of the scene and was integrated during the rehearsal period. Rather than perceiving the Prologue as the introduction to these characters, Paul Gelineau chose to present who they become in relation to Greg (as a man and as a priest)

by the end of the play. While it was not written with that intention in mind, I feel that it is a justified choice that will be maintained in future drafts.

The second convention brought two time frames together simultaneously (p.50, 66, 68, and 79). Each of these sections of the adaptation illustrate how events were portrayed simultaneously on the stage, however, each example employ this convention in a slightly different manner. The first example, (p.50), presents two different times and spaces metonymically linked by Greg: the world of Greg and Graham, in Graham's apartment, meshes with the world of Greg, in the rectory, with Matthew (p.50). The result is that Greg is caught between two different time frames, one with each of the other characters:

> *A few hours later, early morning at the rectory.* GREG *enters the rectory and is somewhat agitated and dishevelled.* GRAHAM*'s presence existence still lingers in* GREG*'s mind such that* GRAHAM *is where he was at the end of the last scene.* MATTHEW *enters.*
>
> MATTHEW You switched the light off in the hall.
> GREG Yes?
> MATTHEW Yes, well, I always keep it on at night -- "At my window a little light will keep burning, All may come in, The arms of a friend are waiting."
> GREG Tammy Wynette?
> MATTHEW It's John 23, actually.
> GRAHAM Are you a Catholic?
> MATTHEW Do you want to talk?
> GRAHAM It takes one to know one.
> GREG No, thanks.
> GRAHAM Do you want to stay?
> GREG Maybe another time. I'm kind of tired.
> MATTHEW Are you sure?
> GRAHAM Yeah, maybe another time.
> GREG Thanks, though.
> MATTHEW Of course. Ok. Good-night.[*Exits.*]
> GREG Good-night.
> GRAHAM Good-night.
>
> *Slow fade to black.* (p.50)

Greg's words are appropriate for either conversation and for either time and space. The

tri-alogue mutates even further when Graham answers Matthew's question:

MATTHEW Are you sure?
GRAHAM Yeah, maybe another time.

Here, the two worlds connect on a level that privileges the audience (and Greg). These two worlds weave together creating an absence of absolute "real time." Greg's dialogue with Matthew is understood to have happened after he leaves Graham's apartment, however, Greg's concurrent dialogue with Graham displaces that certainty as does the above connection between Matthew and Graham. Time and space become layers that can be overlapped and it is Greg that not only connects these layers, but also encourages the fissures.

The second example of the use of simultaneous time and space occurs as Greg refuses communion to Graham (p.66). Here, Father Ellerton enters and begins the succeeding scene, "*A couple of days later*," before the present scene actually finishes. Father Ellerton is in the "future," but his dialogue with Greg is woven into the present scene between Greg and Graham. Again, Greg serves as a metonymic link between the two scenes:

GRAHAM *is last in line to receive communion.* GREG *is silent.* GRAHAM *sticks out his tongue to receive the host.* GREG *does not move. The* CONGREGATION *dissolves and exits, as* ELLERTON *enters.* GREG *and* GRAHAM *remain transfixed.*

ELLERTON And you couldn't give him communion?
GREG [*His eyes still fixed on* GRAHAM.] No.
ELLERTON I never denied anyone communion. They had more right to receive it, than I had to give it.

The spell breaks. GRAHAM *steps back away from* GREG, *perhaps smugly, and exits.* MATTHEW *steps forward.*

MATTHEW Who was he?
GREG I've no idea.

Pause. MATTHEW *exits.*
Blackout.

A couple of days later. GREG *visiting* ELLERTON *in the country.*

GREG [*To* ELLERTON.] Have you always been celibate?
ELLERTON I'm not proud of it. It's a gift from God. He gave me the gift of celibacy, He gave you the gift of certainty of vocation. Two completely different gifts.
GREG I want both. (p.67)

The manipulation of time in this scene is a leap into the future: Greg and Ellerton engage in a conversation that occurs a few days later while, simultaneously, Greg remains in the moment with Graham. The overlapping convention, in this case, serves to propel the sequence of events forward. The distinction is that the "present" scene with Greg and Graham is sustained despite the interjections from Ellerton and the time and space he represents.

The above excerpt includes a blackout that was added to the performance text. The blackout was considered necessary to allow Greg to remove his vestment from the communion ceremony to make the switch to the following scene with Ellerton. This blackout, like several others in the play, disrupted the flow of the scene and, consequently, lost the overlapping of time and space - the penetration of the future into the present. The next draft will revert back to an earlier draft which did not include the blackout, but rather a stage direction; "*A couple of days later.* GREG *visiting* ELLERTON *in the country.*"

The third example occurs in the "discovery scene" - when Mary discovers the incest (p.68). Unlike the previous sections in the text which exemplify my own manipulation of time and space, this scene is represented in a manner similar to what occurs in the film. Greg's appeal to God to "do something" is concurrent to the actual discovery of the incest in the Unsworth home. It is a powerful scene in which two moments of extreme crisis collide. As Greg desperately tries to summon the strength to maintain his faith in God and in a church which prevents his Christian duty towards Lisa, the unpalatable and horrific truth of her husband's behaviour is revealed to Mary.

I saw no reason to significantly alter this scene in the adaptation for the stage as the simultaneity of the events could be easily depicted. The simultaneous time and space convention was already established in the adaptation, and it is the simultaneity of these

events that create the dramatic poignancy of the scene. The film captured the simultaneity of events by cutting from Greg to the Unsworth's but maintained Greg's prayer as a voice-over for the scenes in the Unsworth home. This concurrent effect was achieved on stage simply by having both spaces - Greg's room and the Unsworth home - represented on stage at the same time:

> GREG ...The secrecy of confession, how can that be good when it allows evil to thrive. You'd speak out. You would speak out. I know you'd speak out. [*He collapses to his knees in prayer.*] "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name..."
>
> *As* GREG *prays:* LISA *enters.* PHIL *enters.* LISA *walks slowly, not necessarily trying to avoid* PHIL, *but to some extent trying to maintain a distance.* PHIL *reaches out to* LISA. *She finds herself resigning to the inevitable. With complete indifference she takes off her sweater as they both exit.*
>
> GREG [*Continuing.*] Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For ever and ever. Amen. [*Pause.*] Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name... (p.69)

And also:

> GREG *continues praying softly but urgently as* MARY *enters. He repeats the prayer, increasing in volume and fervour, and should finish by the time* MARY *re-appears.*
>
> MARY [*As she enters.*] Li-sa? I'm home early, Chicken. I thought we could make some cookies. Lisa? [*Seeing them off-stage.*] What are you doing? What are you doing, Phil? What are you doing? (p.69)

Greg's prayer becomes a pulse beneath the events at the Unsworth home and reinforces the coincidental element of the two situations. Similarly, the off-stge action at the Unsworth's sustains the dramatic tension initiated by Greg's direct appeal to God. The

tension in each situation serves to fuel the other, and this meshing of their worlds becomes a simultaneity of crises. Again, the audience is given a superior position of knowledge over the characters.

Although the dynamics of this scene were relatively unchanged from the original film, the scene was punctuated with a manipulation of time and space:

> MARY [*To* LISA.] I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. [*To* GREG.] You knew. You knew and you did nothing. What kind of man are you? I hope you burn in hell. (p.70)

It utilized the established convention that two separate worlds (spaces) are visible to the audience, but not to the actors. However, this convention also affords the luxury of dissolving quickly the barriers between the two worlds. Within a single moment, Mary can turn away from Lisa and enter Greg's world a day later. In the previous examples of how time and space were manipulated in the adaptation process, Greg was the metonymic link between the time frames, but in this case it is Mary who is the connection between the two worlds and advances time forward.

The last use of the simultaneous convention portrayed Greg's and Matthew's sermons in two different churches on the same day (p.79). Not only did this allow for interconnections between the content of both sermons, but also reinforced the "universal" connotation of Catholicism:

> GREG *delivers his sermon in the country parish, as* MATTHEW *delivers his at St. Mary's. They are each in their own separate worlds.*
>
> GREG Nice word, scapegoat.
> MATTHEW Do you think God gives a damn?
> GREG The word, scapegoat, dates back to an old Jewish custom.
> MATTHEW What with war, famine, disaster, millions slaughtering each other--
> GREG The people in the village would invest all the sins of the tribe into a goat, and kick it up the back side so that it escaped into the hills, taking all the sins with it.
> MATTHEW With all of these things on his mind, do you really think God gives a damn about what men do with their dicks?
> GREG In ancient Greece, human scapegoats were used to

mitigate a plague or some other calamity. (p.79)

The choice to dove-tail their sermons and present them concurrently was an attempt to capture the immediacy of the argument that they present in their respective sermons on the same day. The bond between the two priests that is established in the preceding scene, (p.75), continues in this scene by illustrating the effect and influence they have on each other. The scene concluded in the simultaneous profession of faith. This not only emphasizes the universality of Catholicism - that in churches around the world, the same mass is being said - but the simultaneity also permeates the barrier between the two locations, and symbolically links Greg and Matthew:

GREG *and* MATTHEW
Let us offer our Lord Jesus Christ the profession of our faith. "I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord..."

Slow fade to black. (p.81)

The third convention, a "time warp," refers to moments which travel backwards in time and return to "real time" within one scene. One scene (a flashback) acts as a footnote to another scene, or as a scene-within-a-scene (p.72 and 77). Structurally, the path of the "time warp" involves three elements: the trigger, the "tangent" of the "time warp" is followed and played out and, then, the scene returns back to real time as though the flashback never occurred. The triggers that instigates the "time warps" are questions; the first concerns the Bishop (p.72), while the second, relates to Graham (p.77). The questions serve to propel Greg backwards in time and, in doing so, allow the audience to follow:

GREG But what about the Bishop?
MATTHEW Oh, fuck the Bishop. Don't take that literally.

The BISHOP *enters, and sits in the confessional.* GREG *goes to him, kneels.*

BISHOP What's Matthew been saying?
GREG He's been very supportive. He thinks being gay has made

me a good priest -- human, compassionate. He thinks that all that's happened recently has made me a better one. More human. More compassionate.

BISHOP Go out and commit mass murder, and he'll want you canonized. Am I to understand that you wish to carry on serving God?

GREG Yes, Your Excellency.

BISHOP The best way for you to serve God is to disappear. The best way for you to serve God is to piss-off out of my diocese. Is that clear?

GREG Yes.

BISHOP Good. I've arranged for you to be transferred to Father Augustus's parish. Hopefully, it will be quiet enough out there for you to stay out of trouble. Do I make myself understood?

GREG Yes, Your Excellency.

The BISHOP *exits.* GREG *switches back to real time.* MATTHEW *gives* GREG *a look.*

GREG What do you want me to do -- disobey the Bishop? Come on, Matthew, be realistic. He's banished me to the wilderness like some pathetic scapegoat, taking the sins of every homosexual with me.

MATTHEW But it's our parish, Greg. (p.72)

The second "time warp" occurs in the "bonding scene," and Greg and Matthew talk about Graham (p.77). Like the previous example, the line preceding the "time warp" echoes through to the flashback. It serves not only to shift easily into the other time frame, but it also mends the fissure caused by the "time warp" and the scene continues as though there was no break in thought. In this second example, the line that triggered the "time warp" could essentially, in the playing of it, be delivered to Graham in the "past":

MATTHEW Listen to what you're saying, Greg. This is the man that gave you his body. How dare you talk like that. In the name of God, Greg, you've got to ask yourself -- No, look at me, look at me when I'm talking to you. To call another human being "Satan," what kind of religion is that? What kind of sick twisted brain-wash have you been through? His sole purpose in life is to tempt you into sin, is that what you're saying? You're Christ, and he's the bloody

serpent? Is that what you're saying, you arrogant prick?

GRAHAM *enters.*

GREG I told him that I don't think it's a good idea that we see each other again. [*To* GRAHAM, *in a flood of emotion.*] I can't do this anymore. It's wrong.

GRAHAM It's wrong? According to who? To what? Your precious church and its rules? Is it wrong for you, or just wrong for you the priest? [*Pause.*] Christ, Greg, grow up.

GREG What do you want me to--

GRAHAM What we have is beautiful. It's society, and your almighty God that make it ugly. [*Pause.*] You shouldn't have started something you can't finish.

GREG I know. I'm sorry. There were risks and there were consequences, I know, but there was, there was also a need. I'm sorry. I'm sorry if I've--

GRAHAM How can something that feels so right, be wrong? [*Pause.*] Greg? How can it be wrong? How can it be wrong to love?

GREG I don't know. It just is. [*Pause. While holding the moment with* GRAHAM, *he resumes his conversation with* MATTHEW.] I think I love him.

GRAHAM [*As he recedes and exits.*] God bless you.

MATTHEW Do you want him?

GREG Yes. (p.77)

As the initial line has resonance in both worlds, to Matthew and to Graham, so does the final line, "I think I love him." It served as a bridge between the two worlds and pulled Greg out of the "time warp," as well as distending the boundary between these two worlds. Despite the "re-playing," or the "re-living" of this flashback, "I love him" remains the "element" what was left unsaid. Greg may physically be in both worlds for a moment, but his words belong and are heard only in his world with Matthew.

The fourth manipulation of time and space relied on principles of selectivity. This convention was used most notably in the congregation and confessional scenes. The Mass ceremony in its entirety, for example, was not a realistic choice for the theatre as it does little to further the story. Selected moments were therefore chosen and woven into the fabric of the adaptation to establish a sense of ceremony but also to elicit the necessary

event in order to propel the story forward. This convention is more characteristically cinematic, as it is very easy to compress time and float through a scene in a couple of minutes which, in real time, would take an hour. The challenge in the adaptation process then, became a matter of finding the right balance - enough ceremony to capture the essence of the ritual, but not enough to overshadow the focus of the play.

The congregation scenes, (p.42, 66, and 82), were selectively focussed on only certain segments of the Catholic Mass. For example, the scene in which Graham is refused communion (p.66) begins just prior to the congregation lining up to receive the host. The ceremony is established quickly, and so is the conflict of the scene. Similarly, the final congregation scene, (p.82), begins as Mark reads the general intercession. The scene then unfolds into the ceremonial communion and Greg's participation in communion, which becomes the culminating conflict. The evolution towards the production draft of these scenes was slow, and the difficulty lay in the discovery of a balance. It seemed necessary to begin with including the entire Mass, word for word, in order to clearly distinguish between what was extraneous and what actually served the play.

The confessional scenes, with Amanda, Billy and Lisa, were treated as a similar convention as the congregation scenes (p.51). The purpose for the sequence was to capture the repetitious duties of Greg's life as a priest, as well as creating tension for Lisa's story. The difficulty was using the three confessions to somehow represent a whole afternoon of confessions. The production was able to capture this representation by book-ending each individual confession with a blackout and overlapping the last line of one with the first line of the following confesion. The blackouts served to denote the passage of time without actually using stage time to achieve it. Lisa's story was then able to surface quickly and dramatically.

A majority of the blackouts were used to denote the passage of time. However, because they were also used to punctuate specific moments, the consistency of their function was lost and they ultimately detracted from the rhythm of the production. Throughout the adaptation process the blackouts were used to encapsulate significant moments or visual images - to emphasize or underline the moments or images. However,

what was discovered in the production was the physical reality of the blackouts, actually "living" them. Many could be omitted immediately, and shall be in the next draft. There are others, however, which may require other conventions: simple indications such as "*transition into two weeks later at the parish in the country*." This would draw attention to the fact that a shift occurs, but does not necessarily dictate how this shift would be achieved and would therefore be open to interpretation.

The question of space, or locations and settings, presented an initial challenge to the adaptation process. Similar to the challenges faced in terms of characters, it was immediately necessary to narrow the scope of the film to suit the stage adaptation. Just as the extraneous characters were quickly and easily discarded, many of the various "spaces" were similarly discarded. For example, the scenes in the film that occur in the pub, the gym, and the hospital, were discarded along with their dialogue. This led to a manageable list of locations: St. Mary's church and rectory, the Unsworth home, a city park, a church in the country and its rectory.

In some instances fragments of the dialogue from the excised scenes were incorporated into other scene/location in the adaptation. Mark's "Judas" speech, (p.54), for example, was retained in the adaptation but it was moved from the gym to the city park. The intention surrounding this choice stemmed not only from the relevant content of the speech, but also to establish his friendship with Greg, the basis of which is challenged by the end of the play.

Another example was Greg's religion class: held in a high school in the film, but adapted to the church in the stage version (p.56). The church setting served the purpose and also lends itself as a location for the following "seizure scene." Time was allowed continuous flow without breaking it up with blackouts to change locations. By keeping it in the church, Mary and Phil come to Greg and Lisa, rather than Greg walking Lisa home after the seizure. Having this scene take place in the church actually gives Greg more strength to face Phil whereas, in the film, Greg is at the Unsworth's, and powerless against Phil and his actions.

Greg's confession to the Bishop was added for the adaptation, but the dialogue

is from a scene in the film that takes place in the hospital, when Greg is recovering from an overdose (p.73). This dialogue was displaced to a flashback, or "time warp," as previously mentioned, and the location shifted from the hospital to the confessional. In the adaptation the Bishop transfers Greg from his diocese when Greg's homosexuality is publicized. Greg's overdose is, therefore, in reaction to the accumulation of the publicity and the transfer. In the film, however, the overdose is in response to the publicity. These associated events - the publicity and the overdose - then provoke the Bishop to transfer Greg to another parish.

Examples of how the dialogue was retained but the location of the scene was altered represented some of the dramaturgical decisions that were made in the adaptation process. These decisions stemmed from an examination of the importance and relevance of the particular scene and whether or not the dialogue could be separated from its location. In some instances, the dialogue was deemed significant but the location or situation was of lesser significance. The result was that certain sections of dialogue were given to characters different from the original film. This is discussed in greater depth in the following chapter on characterization.

CHAPTER II

DRAMATURGICAL DECISIONS: CHARACTERIZATION

Unlike the significant changes to the representation of time and space, the treatment of characterization in the adaptation was overshadowed by the film, and thus, relatively minimal. In narrowing the scope of the film for the adaptation, seven central characters surfaced as necessary components to the telling of Greg's story: Matthew, Naomi (Maria in the film), Graham, Lisa, Mary, and Phil. Seven additional characters were required to fill specific roles, such as the Bishop as a representative of the authority of the Catholic Church, which in turn, contributed to the central themes. Also, these seven additional characters helped to establish a sense of community - a community which, at the end of the play, turned against Greg. Primarily, the characters, their relationships, and their respective journeys were transposed directly to the stage, with only slight deviations from the original film. However, some characters, such as Greg, Lisa, and Mark, were embellished to a greater extent than other.

Once the important ideas and issues of the film were isolated, Greg and his story surfaced in the critical position as the centre. Greg's character is a slightly different representation than the film because of the overall concept of the adaptation due to the changes in the structure (Chapter I) and the visual imagery (Chapter III). The adaptation adopted an expressionistic quality by delving into Greg's perceptions, nightmares, and memories. Because of Greg's position as the protagonist, the cumulative effect of all of the changes that were made in the adaptation process, ultimately affected his character and story on some level.

Justifying Greg's return to the city and St. Mary's church was one of the main obstacles confronted in the development of his character in the adaptation. The solution was found in the repetition of the "scapegoat" sermon (p.80), and by incorporating some of Matthew's views:

> Well, I don't understand why we insist on placing all these sins on society, as a whole. What about the individual? Individual responsibility? If you forget about the individual...aren't you spitting in the face of God? We can talk about spitting in the face of God by exploiting the work force, throwing people out of their homes, turning their back on the elderly, shutting down schools and hospitals, forcing people to depend on U.I. or welfare, but isn't this, in a sense, a betrayal? - society's betrayal of the individual? The point is, if anyone does anything to prevent one individual from reaching his or her full potential, isn't that interfering in creation, and spitting in the face of God? What's most important not to overlook is the individual's betrayal to himself and to his own personal truths. That's what I believe. That's my truth. It's what makes me...remain...a priest. (p.80)

In addition to providing evidence of Greg's decision to return to the city, the sermon also illustrated the strengthened relationship between Matthew and Greg.

Interestingly, Greg's overdose was not incorporated into the adaptation until the rehearsal period. Because it was such a late addition, the justification and dramatic tension preceding this event was not solidified in the production draft. A possible solution to remedy this in future drafts would be to move the penultimate scene between Greg and Mary at her door, (p.81), to occur just prior to the overdose. The sequence would then be as follows: Greg's arrest; rectory scene with Matthew, Naomi and Greg (p.71); "time warp" to confession to the Bishop; Greg returns to previous scene with Matthew and Naomi; "time warp" to scene with Mary and Greg asking for forgiveness; Greg returns to previous scene with Matthew and Naomi; overdose. Within that one particular scene (p.71), two "time warps" would occur. Restructuring this scene in this way strengthens Greg's plea for forgiveness from Mary because he has just been notified that he is to be transferred. As it stands now, Greg seeks her forgiveness just prior to returning to St. Mary's, is refused forgiveness, but despite this rejection arrives at St. Mary's in the final scene to face the congregation. This rearrangement also provides a clearer justification for Greg's overdose as a reaction to the accumulation of events.

The justification for Greg and Graham's relationship was difficult to incorporate in the adaptation, and it remains a weakness in the script. The flashback to Graham, (p.77), was added to the adaptation in an attempt to strengthen their relationship. On the whole,

the play progresses from a range of secrets and silences toward direct, honest, and inevitable confrontations. The scene between Greg and Graham is an example of this shift toward the confrontational:

GREG	I told him that I don't think it's a good idea that we see each other again. [*To* GRAHAM, *in a flood of emotion.*] I can't do this anymore. It's wrong.
GRAHAM	It's wrong? According to who? To what? Your precious church and its rules? Is it wrong for you, or just wrong for you the priest? [*Pause.*] Christ, Greg, grow up.
GREG	What do you want me to--
GRAHAM	What we have is beautiful. It's society, and your almighty God that make it ugly. [*Pause.*] You shouldn't have started something you can't finish.
GREG	I know. I'm sorry. There were risks and there were consequences, I know, but there was, there was also a need. I'm sorry. I'm sorry if I've--
GRAHAM	How can something that feels so right, be wrong? [*Pause.*] Greg? How can it be wrong? How can it be wrong to love?
GREG	I don't know. It just is. [*Pause. While holding the moment with* GRAHAM, *he resumes his conversation with* MATTHEW.] I think I love him. (p.77)

The argument Graham presents to Greg, "how can it be wrong to love," reinforces the dichotomy of Christianity and the Church - while Christianity heralds love for all mankind, the Church forbids this specific "kind" of love.

Throughout the writing process, Matthew's character changed very little from the original film. The majority of his scenes in the film with Greg, the Bishop, Naomi and the congregation were retained in the adaptation, with only a few slight changes toward the end of the play. Specifically, these changes were seen in the "bonding" or "drunk" scene (p.75), and the final scene (p.82) and were instigated during the rehearsal process.

The "bonding" scene was a late addition to the rehearsal draft, and stems almost directly from the original film. It was incorporated to help justify Greg's decision to return to St. Mary's church at the end of the play. The addition of this scene accomplished three things: as in the film, it marks i) a significant change in Greg and Matthew's relationship; ii) it presents an occasion in which Matthew and Greg are able to talk openly about Greg's

relationship with Graham; and iii) through the addition of Matthew's section of dialogue at the end, Greg is given significant justification to return to St. Mary's. This last point, Matthew's speech, is an embellishment of the original scene in the film:

> ...until you see things as they are, you'll stay out here, getting a dollar for every mass you say and not being allowed to go out after dark. When are you going to grow up, Greg? When are you going to realize that you can't be that idealistic priest you want to be until you start facing some truths about yourself. How long are you going to deny who you are underneath those pristine vestments of yours? It's about being true to yourself, Greg, and it's about time you were, don't you think? (p.78)

By embellishing this final section of the scene, there seemed to be more justification for Greg to return to St. Mary's at the end of the play. By strengthening the shift in their relationship and mutual understanding of each other, the change is significant enough to justify Greg's decision to return. Consequently, Greg's return strengthens the bond between Matthew and Greg and illustrates the effect and influence Matthew has on Greg.

The final scene, like the previous example, did not fall into place until the rehearsal period. Dating back to the first reading in October, 1996, this scene left some characters unresolved, primarily Mary. The immediate question was to discern which of the members of the congregation would leave when Greg returns? Re-structuring the question, to ask instead, what could Matthew say to make them stay, proved a better tactic. Matthew's argument then became:

> How dare you turn your back on this man. How dare you do this, and call yourselves Catholics. If you are so adamant about judging him, why haven't you judged me all these years? Why? Ask yourselves that question. You have no right to make this man your scapegoat. That's what you're doing if you reject him - you're asking him to take on your sins, your inability to forgive, your inability to show compassion. (p.84)

In the performance, it was Lisa, who initiated the decision to remain. Her decision was followed closely by Billy, Mark, Patrick, and Bob as they took their seats, all in their own time, with varying degrees of reluctance. The director's choice to have the younger generation initiate the decision to stay was quite compelling. Their acceptance was much more compassionate, open, and honest than the reticent older generation in the

congregation.

In terms of the next draft, Matthew's relationship with Naomi will be stronger, as well as developing further his relationship with the congregation. The development of Naomi's character was frustrating and was left unresolved at the various stages of the process. She is an important figure in the telling of the story. Realistically, however, she serves only to provide the physical presence of Matthew's broken vow.

In an attempt to confront the challenge her character presents, Naomi's presence was needed in many additional scenes. These additional scenes ended up being the congregational scenes, which offered little insight to her character. Her speech to Greg, (p.48), is indicative of numerous character qualities, but the development of her character did not extend beyond this speech. In retrospect, her speech to Greg was the "be all and end all" of Naomi. The result was that the play advocated the negative "seen but not heard" stereotype. The visual presence of Naomi was relied upon, rather than the physical presence of the "character." This was reinforced in the rehearsal process, as the actor playing Naomi was quite frustrated by a role with so few words to glean clues about her character. This can be remedied through a further development of her relationship with Matthew in the next draft. Also, just as Matthew and Greg's relationship goes through a significant change by the end of the play, I think there exists the opportunity to develop the relationship between Naomi and Greg as well.

Graham's character needed further development since he was found to be such an integral figure in the telling of Greg's story. In the interview with Jimmy McGovern, he expressed that the film director, Antonia Bird, imposed the love story between Greg and Graham. The lack of textual support for their relationship in the film proved to be a similar problem in the adaptation. In an attempt to remedy their story, the "break-up scene" was added and helped voice the unspoken reality of their "illicit" relationship (p.77). I use the word "illicit" because it is the forbidden nature of their relationship according to the church and Greg's beliefs that make it illicit - not illicit in and of itself. Their relationship is compelling and has significant dramatic potential, however, the development and justification of it was not fully addressed in the performance text. The significance of their

relationship which, is ambiguous in the production draft, will be clarified in future drafts.

The addition of Lisa's monologue is the elemental change in her character development from the original film (p.57). The monologue was inspired by Judith Thompson, who was a guest at the lecture series at the Stratford Festival in July, 1996. As well as reading from her various plays, she spoke openly about her epilepsy. What was most intriguing about her history with epilepsy was how she "remembered" the seizure, as opposed to the more common experience of blacking-out. She admitted that many of the primal fears that she reveals so vividly in her plays, actually stem from what she remembers experiencing during her seizures. In terms of Lisa's character, her own specific seizure-world was worth exploring. The monologue became a window into her emotional trauma, and through this window, the horrific and devastating reality of her situation is revealed. The monologue contributes to Greg's struggle with the church regulations concerning the seal of confession. According to the "strictest perpetual silence," Greg is unable to help her - making the significance of his paralysis more crippling. In the next draft the visual imagery that is introduced in her monologue will be integrated into other aspects of the play. There are many parallels between Lisa's seizure-world and Greg's nightmare that can be explored.

In the adaptation process, the development of Mary went through very few changes. The significant decision, however, was in the final scene: Is she in the congregation when Greg returns? If so, what does she do? What does she say? She is not present in the final scene in the film, nor was she present in the draft that was read in October. It was at this first reading that the question of her absence arose. The subsequent drafts tended to waffle on the question. As previously discussed, the final scene presented numerous challenges. Mary's journey was also at stake: If she leaves, does Lisa stay? Would she let Lisa stay? Would she stay if Lisa did? The actor (playing Mary) and the director found a poignant resolution in the rehearsal period which resulted in:

BOB	"Take my statutes and my laws, and do none of these abominations."
GREG	"Judge not that you may not be judged."
MARY	How dare you. How dare you come back

here. Haven't you caused enough pain?
[*Exits, taking* LISA *with her.*] (p.83)

Lisa returns a few moments later and takes her seat. The actor chose to remain in the aisle, weeping, and took her final exit just the communion ceremony continues with Greg's participation.

Phil, much like Mary's character, was not significantly altered from the original film. The minimal development of Phil's character was similar to that of Naomi, as they both have strong, clearly defined speeches, which ultimately inhibited any further development. Phil's confession, (p.62), encapsulated his character, but at the same time also limits his range. He embodies such a vile, unpalatable, and contemptible concept and, because of this, development seemed inane and awkward.

In discussions with Paul Gelineau, the director, other ways of approaching Phil's character work were discovered. If he was presented as a loving and caring father before we learn of the incest, the dramatic impact could become stronger. But the question of how to resolve his story remains unanswered. Some audience feedback suggested that after Mary discovers the incest, we do not really need to find out what happens to him. Contrasting feedback suggested that the audience needs assurance that Phil was justly punished. Later drafts will provide the opportunity to further explore the resolution of his story.

Father Ellerton was one of the first characters to be excised and the first to be brought back. Ellerton is the first character you see in the film, and hence there was an obligation to begin the adaptation at a different place and with a different image. The obvious choice at the time was to cut Ellerton's character completely. However, it was soon realized that Ellerton is in fact integral to my vision of what the play is about. His function in Greg's journey is to act as a confidante when Greg has no one else to whom he can turn. In excising Ellerton, Greg's only opportunity to talk openly about his homosexuality was also excised. Greg's journey was incomplete without the celibacy dialogue (p.67) - not only for the character, but for the audience as well.

A solution seemed to point in the direction of embellishing the relationship between

Greg and Ellerton. Establishing a connection between them seemed to justify Greg turning to Ellerton later on in the play. Their first meeting became an image of the archetypal "out with the old, in with the new." This was enhanced in the production by presenting them as mirror images of each other - both with their belongings in hand, facing each other in the church, the only difference being the direction in which they are going. Their experiences, what Ellerton has already experienced and what Greg is about to experience, come face to face, there is an exchange, and then they move on.

The decision to include Ellerton came with the intent to keep the celibacy dialogue (p.67). I began to see Ellerton as a guardian angel figure as the shape of the scene in which Greg refuses Graham communion (p.66), melted into the dialogue between Greg and Ellerton about celibacy. Working with these images helped in the development of Ellerton's character and his relationship to Greg. Including him in the nightmare scene (p.60) hints further at the impact and influence he has on Greg.

Ambiguity still surrounds Ellerton, however, and it is enough to make his character and his function an obstacle to the telling of the story. The comments about Ellerton by the Bishop, Matthew, and Mark, vary and reflect the difference between what the church officials know and what they allow the public to know about a situation like Ellerton's erratic behaviour and possible failing mental health.

The character, Mark, is the result of a series of choices. Mark stemmed from the initial choice to keep the "Judas speech" in the adaptation (p.54). Similar to the celibacy dialogue between Greg and Ellerton, the "Judas speech" was salvaged along with the character. The character of Mark began as Charlie, and like the film, he really only had the one "Judas scene" with Greg (p.54). The decision of triple cast with Man One and Sitting Bull soon followed - each role consisting of only one or two scenes per character. As the rehearsal period approached and auditions were happening, it was realized that Sitting Bull was extraneous. That left the problem of Mark and Man One in two isolated scenes without any character journey whatsoever. During rehearsals, however, it became obvious that it would be much more interesting to see Mark in the final scene, rather than introducing Man One. Choosing to keep him as Mark throughout the play, enabled him

to partake in the congregation scenes as himself, which further solidified his character. As a result, Mark has a very interesting journey with the transition from being Greg's friend at the beginning, to being truly confused about this friendship as well as his Catholic beliefs by the end of the play.

The Bishop, much like Ellerton, was a character that was excised on first impulse and brought back later once his function was realized. He represents the authority that dictates and effects the decisions both Greg and Matthew face. The physical absence of this authority seemed to lose the strength and impact of the church. His presence, on the other hand, contributes to the ceremonial, the ritualistic, and the religious imagery that helps create and maintain the underlying fabric of Greg's story. The double-casting of Man One (Bob) and the Bishop, in production, is questionable and problematic. The significance and similarities of the arguments of both the Bishop and Man One (Bob) by the end of the play, are too similar not to connect or relate one to the other, regardless of the convention. I intend to seek other solutions to double-casting in future drafts, while trying to maintain a feasible sized cast.

Man One (later Bob) was not completely excised with the choices concerning Mark. In the early drafts of the adaptation the congregation consisted of "extras," five or ten non-speaking roles. Man One was a designated "speaking" congregation member. With Man One present in all of the congregation scenes, the character had a semblance of a through-line to the end of the play when he fervently objects to Greg's return. The rehearsal process added another congealing element by designating him as Billy's father. This connection helped strengthen the "community"and "familial" aspects of the congregation scenes.

Billy and Amanda were selected from the film to represent the younger generation in the congregation and school-mates for Lisa. Their function leans towards the comic relief element in a very disturbing and thought-provoking play. To go much further with their characters would lead in a direction away from the central issues and ideas. However, in saying that, they contribute significantly to the play on the whole.

In terms of Sitting Bull, I think I am still attracted to the idea of him in the play.

"Nobility, even in defeat," echoes throughout the play, and perhaps the pay-off for this repetition would be to bring him back in the next draft. Earlier drafts included Sitting Bull in the nightmare scene, but perhaps there are other places that may include him as well. Adding him to a future draft may solidify some of the visual imagery that is already present, as well as reinforcing the illusory nature of the adaptation.

The characterization aspect of the adaptation was the most challenging. Adapting, rather than writing an original work, seemed to stifle and inhibit a majority of the character development. Unlike the ease with which the sequence of events and the aspects of time and space were manipulated, the changes in character development seemed much less significant. Further development in this aspect of the adaptation may be facilitated through further development of the visual imagery that was introduced in the Prologue, the nightmare, Lisa's monologue, and the image of Graham on the cross, as well as the patterning of certain images. These elements will be discussed in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

DRAMATURGICAL DECISIONS: VISUAL IMAGERY

There exists an intricate interdependence in the relationships between time, space, characterization, and visual imagery - choices regarding one aspect of the adaptation ultimately incur changes in another. Accordingly, the visual concept for the play dictated the structure and appropriate conventions that would best serve the concept. The adaptation began with a primary visual concept that relied on a fluidity of movement - from scene to scene, from one time period to another, from one thought to another. The time and space conventions that were discussed in Chapter I, therefore, strove to meet the requirements prescribed by this initial concept of movement, rhythm, and visual imagery. Similarly, certain aspects of characterization were affected by the visual imagery, especially the expressionistic quality of Greg's character, the embellishment of Lisa's character with the monologue (p.57), the presence of Ellerton and Graham on the cross (p.38, 67).

The image and rhythm of waves was the initial source of inspiration for the structure and movement of the play. The fluidity and rhythm of waves that rush and engulf, then recede in a moment of calmness before the next wave rises, was transcribed into many of the structural elements in the adaptation (Chapter I). For example, constructs such as entrances before exits were employed so that the succeeding scene begins or overlaps with the preceding scene. Characters "receded" rather than "exited" captured this fluidity by softening the movement of the transitions between the scenes. The characters simply fade from the light and from the focus of the scene. Initially, the congregation scenes, Greg's and Graham's sex scene (p.49), the nightmare (p.60), and the final scene (p.82), were choreographed to incorporate this engulfing wave motion - the rush of the wave would encircle Greg and then recede and fade away, leaving a moment of calmness in its wake. As the play developed, these specifications were omitted. However, some elements of these initial concepts remain and, Paul Gelineau, the director, retained the suggestion of

this original choreography in the production. Future drafts will re-instate this sense of choreography to heighten the visual impact of the adaptation.

Stemming from the wave image, was the concept of a circular swirling motion of everything that "surrounds" Greg which leaves him suspended in the centre. He is circled, stifled, constricted, and restricted by the dominant themes and conflicts of the play - the priesthood, the Church, his latent homosexuality, Matthew's relationship with Naomi, his relationship with Graham, and Phil's relationship with Lisa. Greg was denied a single moment to collect himself, to re-group, to think, or even to step out of the central focus of the play. As a result, a sense of persecution, torment, being gnawed at, pecked at, and constantly being tested became apparent. With this lack of time for Greg to breathe and think, as well as the persistent invasive elements, a similar feeling was intended for the audience. For this reason, the proximity of the actors and the audience became important to the storytelling. The circular image suggested that the play would be best suited to theatre in the round. The off-stage actions ("discovery scene," p.68, "arrest scene," p.70), would occur behind the audience, circling and including them in the action. Theatre in the round offers the audience various perspectives, which was a central to the concept of the adaptation - how the ideas and issues challenge perspective.

The visual imagery present in the production draft surfaces in several recurring patterns. These principle patterns have been categorized into two central images inherent in the adaptation: i) the authority of the church, in both the "transference of power" (Greg's ordination) and its ability to withdraw this "power" (Ellerton's and Greg's removal from the church) and, ii) the act of communion and its associated images of acceptance and rejection, forgiveness and denial. Other images in the adaptation that will be discussed, such as Graham (and Ellerton) on the cross, are connected to these two central patterns. This discussion will focus on not only the images present, but those that will be brought into future drafts.

The Prologue, as discussed in Chapter I, juxtaposed Greg's ordination with the knowledge and experience of certain characters at the end of the play. Visually, the Prologue introduced several images that echo throughout the adaptation. The ordination

ceremony is a symbol of the "transference of power" from the Bishop to Greg. This "transference of power," in addition to the initial ordination ceremony, is a central element representative of a strengthening of relationships. Greg's relationship with God is strengthened through his ordination, and the various relationships in the adaption experience similar moments in which the relationship is strengthened by a similar "transference of power": Matthew induces strength in Greg to return to St. Mary's in their "bonding scene" (p.75), and; Graham's line to Greg, "I love you" which, for Graham, is his way of strengthening his relationship with Greg (p.77).

Conversely, however, the one relationship that breaks this pattern is Lisa and her father. Lisa's monologue not only reflects an opposite image - a relationship based on victimization - but also threatens the strength of Greg's relationship with God. There is no "transference of power" from Greg to Lisa because his relationship, his duty, and his Holy Sacraments, do not provide him with the "power" to help Lisa and her situation. Interestingly, in the interview with Jimmy McGovern (Appendix B), he stated that it is Greg's weakness as a man that perpetuates the discovery of the incest, not his power, his strength, nor his relationship with God.

The Bishop plays a key role not only in the initial "transference of power," but also in the withdrawl of this "power" within the same moment. This occurs in the Prologue as Greg is prostrate on the floor receiving the "power," Ellerton is on the cross; as the power is given to Greg, it is taken away from Ellerton. Greg kneels from the prostrate position to accept the power, and Ellerton falls and collapses to the floor as the power is taken from him. This mirror image of Greg and Ellerton, of receiving and being refused, is carried through to the following scene when the old and the new come face to face (p.39). The central figure of the Bishop acts as a fulcrum in the patterning of this prime authority that decides who receives and who is refused. A continuation of this mirroring image is Greg's removal from St. Mary's parish to the country parish which parallels Ellerton's retirement to his own house in the country.

Resonating from the images present in the Prologue and the authority of the church, is Graham's position in the cross later in the play (p.67). This image, although it

contributes to a principle pattern of images, nonetheless, created a problem for which a solution has yet to be discovered. The poignant image provokes such a wide range of interpretations, that the intention becomes unclear. The persecution connotations of the image are not connected with the character of Graham, but rather it is his image on the cross that is conveys Greg's own "persecution." Whereas, the initial image of Ellerton on the cross in the Prologue relates more directly, and perhaps more clearly, to an image of persecution. The ambiguity of Ellerton's character and function within the play, as discussed in Chapter II, begins with this image of him on the cross. Future drafts will shape his function more clearly, and provide justification for the image of him on the cross.

The patterns of images that reside in the act of communion include not only those of acceptance and forgiveness, but also of rejection and denial. The three congregation scenes challenge the inclusionary nature of the act of communion to the extent that the act turns into one that is exclusionary by the end of the play (p.42, 66, and 82). The acceptance of the congregation and the reciprocal inclusive forgiveness of the congregation by Greg becomes the basis from which the succeeding patterns of imagery diverge.

This image of unconditional acceptance and forgiveness is challenged in the second congregation scene when Greg denies Graham communion. Interestingly, this image of denial functions on several levels; not only does it illustrate Greg's denial of his feelings toward Graham, but it also connotes the denial of Greg's own sexuality, and the denial of homosexuality by the church as an institution. The latter two are inextricably linked and, as discussed in the preceding chapters, is the main conflict of the play. In the performance of this scene, Phil was also in Greg's line to receive communion. Although Greg hesitated, he did not, however, deny Phil. The conflict this presents is difficult to resolve. Greg denying Graham communion is a recognition of his own sin rather than Graham's. However, not denying Phil communion, despite Greg's knowledge of Phil's sin, is connected to the regulations of the seal of confession. Phil's sin was revealed in the confessional which advocates unconditional forgiveness which makes this particular act of communion an example of the "strictest perpetual silence."

The third congregation scene, (p.82), presents a final image of forgiveness. The overt rejection of Greg by the congregation is cumulative of various images and patterns. The congregation in this scene is confronted with the disparity between the Christian act of forgiveness and the rejection of homosexuality in the Catholic Church. The impact of the image is reinforced by the younger generation, specifically Lisa, as her ability to forgive prevails over the stipulations of the church. The significance of Lisa's acceptance as the final image of forgiveness is two-fold. Apart from Greg, Lisa represents the one who was most victimized - not only by her father, but also by the regulations of the church which prevented Greg from helping her. Despite this, she is able to transcend the prejudice of the church regulations and forgive unconditionally. In the interview with Jimmy McGovern, (Appendix B), the issue of Lisa's confession of the incest was discussed. It is the guarantee that Greg is unable to help her that, in turn, enables her to reveal her situation. Regardless of her intention in disclosing the incest to a priest in confession, and the confidence of maintaining the secrecy this implies, does not eradicate nor ignore her need of help, and her attempt in asking for help. The significance of the final image of forgiveness then, is her ability to act against the regulations of the church concerning homosexuality, despite the fact that he was unable to act against the secrecy of confession.

The visual imagery in Lisa's monologue (p.57), as previously stated in Chapter II, will, in future drafts, be incorporated throughout the play. A pattern of associated images from Lisa's "seizure-world" could very well be the essence of Greg's inner conflict as well. The images of drowning, and paralysis relate to the initial concept of the movement and rhythm of the adaptation. The "he" that Lisa refers to in the monologue is not necessarily indicative of Phil, but rather a haunting presence, or primal fear that everyone faces. In future drafts, overt parallels will be explored in Lisa's monologue and in Greg's nightmare, to the extent that Greg articulates the specifics of the nightmare in a similar vocabulary as Lisa's monologue. The "haunting presence" in Greg's world is a culmination of the images and conflicts he faces and that have been discussed in throughout the thesis.

Future drafts of the adaptation will focus on developing the visual imagery, the pattering of specific images, in an attempt to enrich the text. It is difficult to discuss

imagery that lies solely in the text and not in the stage directions. However, the overall concept of the adaptation, the non-linear structure, and certain elements of the characterization establish a visual tone in the play. The ceremony and ritual components have inherent visual connotations and form the basis upon which the relationships between the various characters are created, judged, accepted, rejected and dismantled. But it is in these relationships themselves, that more visual patterning needs to be discovered. The intricate connections between the characters need to be augmented on a textual level, rather than relying on the sequence of events to establish the connections.

In order for this to be accomplished, a significant deviation from the original film is required. The visual impact of the film, apart from the characterization and dramatic intensity, is a specific element that was lost in the adaptation or the transposition process from the film to the stage. The theatricality of the adaptation has not been fully recognized because of this diminished visual patterning. The play cannot rely solely on the sequence of events and the character relationships, but must further develop an additional layer of meanings that are conveyed through the visual realm of theatre.

CONCLUSION

Evaluating the adaptation after the various stages of development - the production, the interview with Jimmy McGovern (Appendix B),Kathleen Flaherty's critique (Appendix C), as well as continuous discussions with Paul Gelineau, Jim DeFelice, DD Kugler, and Jim McTeague - provided a clear and critical view of the adaptation. The individual elements that either worked or didn't work have been discerned and the corresponding solutions either have been discovered or will be explored in future drafts of the adaptation.

On the whole, other than the blackouts, the structure of the play is solid enough to continue building and fine-tuning. Certain aspects of the structure and the manipulations of time and space, Lisa's monologue, and the overall ability of the script to establish and sustain dramatic tension succeeded in meeting both my intentions and my expectations.

In terms of characterization, specific relationships need to be developed further as well as justification for certain characters themselves needs to be re-analyzed. The summation of the problems in the characterization include: Father Ellerton and his function; the arrest scene and how Greg and Graham are discovered; Greg and Graham's relationship; justification for Greg's overdose; and a resolution of Phil.

Visually, the play needs a current of patterns that weave throughout the story and surface at particular moments. Certain elements of these patterns or leitmotifs are in place in the production draft, however, as discussed in Chapter III, they need to be augmented to occupy a significant position in the conveyance of meaning. The act of communion and the transference of power are two images from which related patterns emerge.

Steps have been taken to continue developing the script; hopefully, towards a subsequent production. The support and encouragement from Jimmy McGovern, and the expertise of those that have contributed to the development of the adaptation - Paul Gelineau, Jim DeFelice, DD Kugler, Jim McTeague and Kathleen Flaherty - may influence the producers and distributors of the film to grant permission to continue.

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APPENDIX A

The Production Draft of *Priest*

PRIEST

a film by Jimmy McGovern
adapted for the stage by Lindsay Bell

205-250 Sydenham St.
London, Ontario
N6A 5S1
Canada

Production Draft
February, 1997

CHARACTERS

FATHER ELLERTON, 50's-60's
FATHER MATTHEW THOMAS, late 30's-40's
FATHER GREG PILKINGTON, early 30's
NAOMI KERRIGAN, mid-late 30's
LISA UNSWORTH, 14
MARY UNSWORTH, LISA's mother, late 30's-40's
PHIL UNSWORTH, LISA's father, 40's
GRAHAM, early 30's
MARK, 20's-30's
BILLY, 14
AMANDA, 14
BISHOP / BOB (BILLY's father), 50's-60's
PATRICK / FATHER AUGUSTUS, late 50's

SETTING

The present, in a city in eastern Canada - perhaps Fredericton, New Brunswick.

The space shifts from St. Mary's Catholic Church, St. Mary's rectory, the Unsworth home, Graham's apartment, a city park, a church in the county and its rectory.

PROLOGUE

Opening music: Gregorian Chants by the Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo De Silos.

GREG*'s ordination:* FATHER GREG *lies prostrate on the floor of the sanctuary, arms outstretched, in the shape of the cross. The* BISHOP *presides.*

The music fades and a collage of four voices (GRAHAM, MARY, PHIL) *begin to recite the Lord's Prayer as they enter. Leading these voices is a young girl singing the prayer* (LISA).

LISA [*Entering, singing.*]Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For ever and ever.

GRAHAM, *begins the prayer after* LISA's *"hallowed be thy name."* MARY, *and* PHIL *follow in a similarly staggered manner.*

As the prayers begin, the BISHOP conducts the ordination.

BISHOP That you bless (†)[1] these elect. We beg you to hear us. That you bless (†) and sanctify (†) these elect. We beg you to hear us. [*Chanting.*] That you bless (†) and sanctify (†) and consecrate (†) these elect. We beg you to hear us.

GREG [*Kneeling.*] Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

The BISHOP *places both hands on* GREG*'s head for a moment, signifying the "transfer of power."*

BISHOP My brethren, let us implore God the Father almighty to multiply his heavenly gift in this servant of his whom he has chosen for the office of the priesthood. May he fulfill by his grace the office he receives by his goodness; through Christ our Lord.

BISHOP *and* GREG
Amen.

---

[1] (†) indicates making the sign of the cross.

LISA, *repeats the song once*, GRAHAM, MARY, PHIL *repeat the prayer, again in a staggered manner, as they recede and exit.* GREG *kisses the* BISHOP *'s ring. The* BISHOP *exits.*

GREG [*Praying.*] Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred let me sow love, where there is injury let me sow pardon, where there is doubt let me sow faith, where there is despair let me give hope, where there is darkness let me give light, where there is sadness let me give joy.

The lights come up on FATHER ELLERTON, *who is on the cross.*

GREG [*Continuing.*] O Divine Master, grant I may not try to be comforted but to comfort, not to be understood but to understand, not try to be loved but to love. Because it is in giving that we receive, it is in forgiving that we are forgiven, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.[*He reverently removes his vestments as he exits.*]

A primal scream erupts from FATHER ELLERTON *as he collapses.*

Blackout.

* * * * *

The BISHOP *and* FATHER MATTHEW *enter.*

BISHOP I was going to finally replace Father Ellerton in the new year. But in the light of it all, with everything that has happened recently, I've decided to give him the push now. It was only a matter of time before his duties became far too much for him to handle.

MATTHEW Your Excellency--

BISHOP He's been heading in this direction for years, and the situation has escalated to the point where I have no choice.

MATTHEW Yes, Your Excellency.

BISHOP There's a young priest from St. Patrick's seminary named Greg Pilkington. He wants to come up here and do his bit in the big city.

MATTHEW What's he like?

BISHOP He's a little more orthodox than you. Mind you, just about anyone would be more orthodox than you. Try to keep him in line, please Matthew. I don't want another Ellerton in my diocese. Understand?

MATTHEW Yes, Your Excellency.

The BISHOP *and* MATTHEW *exit.*

* * * * *

ELLERTON *is in the church, with a suitcase.* GREG, *enters the church. He also has a suitcase. They catch each other off-guard.*

GREG You must be Father Ellerton.

ELLERTON And you must be Greg.

An awkward pause.

GREG Where will you go?

ELLERTON I've got a place about an hour outside the city. It was my mother's house -- left to me when she passed on. Funny, I never really thought about the day when I would be living out there. My place has always been here. But now I guess it's as good as anywhere. "Nobility, even in defeat."

Another awkward pause.

GREG Well, I suppose we've all got to go eventually. The priesthood is just like anything else, and at sometime or other, retirement is inevitable.

ELLERTON Retiring is one thing, being ousted is another. It was the way he did it that bothers me, Greg. I gave it my life, and in return I got a cup of tea and a biscuit. [*Mimicking the* BISHOP.] "It's time. It's time to move on." You'll be fine, son. I think you'll like St. Mary's, and I'm sure you'll fit in more than I ever did. I'll come into the city to see how you're doing in your first parish. Maybe you can even escape into the country for a visit sometime?

GREG I'd like that. Thank you, Father.

ELLERTON Ellerton.

GREG Thank you, Ellerton.

Another awkward pause.

ELLERTON Well, I best be off, then. No use in a prolonged good-bye. Take care of yourself, Greg. God bless you.

GREG God bless you. And I look forward to seeing you again.

ELLERTON *exits.*

GREG *contemplates his surroundings, perhaps in an effort to make it his, claim it as his own.*

MATTHEW *and* NAOMI KERRIGAN *enter.*

MATTHEW Hi. I'm Matthew Thomas.

GREG [*Shaking* MATTHEW*'s hand.*] Greg Pilkington.

MATTHEW This is Naomi Kerrigan.

GREG Hello.

NAOMI Hello.

MATTHEW Sorry, we weren't here to meet you when you first arrived.

GREG Oh, it was no problem at all. I went over to the rectory first and couldn't find anyone, so I came over here and bumped into Father Ellerton just as he was leaving. I'm glad I got a chance to meet him.

MATTHEW So you met Ellerton, did you? Yes, well. Good. Would you like a beer or something?

GREG [*Awkwardly.*] Umm. Sure. I guess a beer would be fine. Thank you.

NAOMI Matthew, I'll get it -- you two have a lot to talk about. [*Exits.*]

GREG How long have you been at St. Mary's?

MATTHEW About five years, though it feels more like ten. Ellerton had been here for sixteen years when I got here.

GREG And Naomi? Is she the housekeeper?

MATTHEW Yeah. It's seems like it's an article of faith, doesn't it -- "housekeepers must be ugly." Where's it written, I wonder. Maybe it's squeezed in somewhere between transubstantiation and papal infallibility. I prefer this exception to the rules, don't you?

GREG *smiles. There is an awkward pause.*

GREG Who's the Indian Chief in the picture in the front hall?

MATTHEW Ellerton must have left it. It's Sitting Bull -- "Nobility, even in defeat."

NAOMI *enters with the beer -- a bottle for* MATTHEW, *and a bottle and glass for* GREG. *There is a subtle, non-verbal exchange between* MATTHEW *and* NAOMI.

MATTHEW I guess the bishop didn't tell you much about Ellerton and why he left?

GREG No, not really, just that he was "no longer capable of fulfilling his duties."

MATTHEW Yes, well, it's quite sad to see the old guy go. He's had a tough time of it these past few years. [*To* NAOMI, *as she exits.*] Thanks, luv. I thought we could do mass together on Sunday. That way I can introduce you to the parish and it won't be so nerve-wracking for you.

GREG Thank you. That sounds fine.

MATTHEW Good. It'll be interesting to see what kind of priests St. Patrick's is churning out these days.

GREG *gives an nervous chuckle.*

MATTHEW I should really go and help Naomi with things. You probably want to unpack and get yourself settled. Dinner at seven, if that's alright with you?

GREG Yes, that's fine.

MATTHEW Good. Make yourself at home. [*Exits.*]

From off-stage, GREG *hears* MATTHEW *and* NAOMI *laughing and joking around.*

NAOMI [*Off-stage.*] Oh, stop it, will you...Matthew, get out of here...

MATTHEW [*Off-stage.*] Oh, come on, let me help...

* * * * *

It is now Sunday. Off-stage, the CONGREGATION *begins to sing the entrance song:*

Be a rock of refuge for me, oh Lord
A stronghold to save me
For you are my rock, my stronghold
For your name's sake lead me and guide me.

The CONGREGATION *enters St. Mary's church and repeats the song until everyone has entered and is assembled. They reverently genuflect and make the sign of the cross as they take their places. The* CONGREGATION *includes* PHIL, MARY, MARK, BOB, PATRICK *and* NAOMI.

BILLY *leads the entrance procession and carries the cross. He is followed by* LISA *and* AMANDA, *who carry the chalice and cruets.* MATTHEW *and* GREG *follow.*

MATTHEW *and* GREG *stand before the altar, step forward and kiss the altar. They receive the chalice and cruets.* MATTHEW *and* GREG *turn to face the* CONGREGATION, *everyone makes the sign of the cross.*

MATTHEW In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

CONGREGATION
Amen.

MATTHEW [*Extending his hands to greet the people.*] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

CONGREGATION
And also with you.

MATTHEW This is Father Greg Pickling -- Pilkington from St. Patrick's seminary. He'll be taking over Father Ellerton's duties. And he's agreed to join us for a beer at the Lamb and Flag, so you can all have a chat with him there.

The CONGREGATION *smiles with familiarity at* MATTHEW*'s introduction.*

MATTHEW You were sent to heal the contrite: Lord, have mercy.

CONGREGATION
Lord, have mercy.

MATTHEW You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.

CONGREGATION
Christ, have mercy.

MATTHEW You plead for us at the right hand of the Father: Lord, have mercy.

CONGREGATION
Lord, have mercy.

MATTHEW May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

CONGREGATION
Amen.

MATTHEW [*With his hands joined.*] Let us pray.

All pray silently.

MATTHEW *and* CONGREGATION
Amen.

MATTHEW *takes a seat in the congregation after he initiates a round of applause of encouragement to indicate that it is time for* GREG*'s sermon.* GREG *steps forward hesitantly, caught off-guard.*

GREG Scapegoat. The word dates back to an old Jewish custom. The people in the village would invest all the sins of the tribe into a goat, and kick it up the backside so that it escaped into the hills, taking all the sins with it. Today's scapegoat is a bit different. It's that mythical beast called

society -- drug addiction, alcoholism, gambling, prostitution, violence. They're not our sins anymore. They're not the fault of the individual anymore. They're society's fault. Well, I'm sorry, I don't understand that.

MATTHEW *steps forward, cutting off* GREG, *and by extending his arms, he asks the people to offer their profession of faith. As the* CONGREGATION *professes their faith* MATTHEW *and* GREG *prepare the Eucharist, and their dialogue occurs simultaneously with the* CONGREGATION*'s profession of faith.*

CONGREGATION

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate / was crucified, died and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

GREG You didn't like it?

MATTHEW It was interesting.

GREG You didn't like it.

MATTHEW I said it was interesting.

GREG And by "interesting" you mean boring, irrelevant, and completely uninteresting?

MATTHEW Ok. Fine. I found it offensive. [*To the* CONGREGATION, *having finished their profession of faith.*] Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble and contrite hearts.

CONGREGATION

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and the glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.

MATTHEW All-powerful God, accept these gifts we offer you and see in them your Son Jesus Christ, who is both priest and sacrifice. May I who share in his priesthood always be a spiritual offering pleasing to you. Grant this

through Christ our Lord.

CONGREGATION
Amen.

GREG The peace of the Lord be with you always.

CONGREGATION
And also with you.

GREG Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

The CONGREGATION *mingles "Peace be with you."*

GREG [*To* MATTHEW, *resuming their conversation.*] Offensive? Why? Do you expect less of the people because they live in a poor parish? Personally, I find that offensive, even patronizing.

MATTHEW Really?

PHIL Hey, Matt.

MATTHEW Ah, Phil. Good to see you.

PHIL Thanks, you too.

MATTHEW [*Hugging them.*] Hello, Mary, Lisa.

MARY, LISA
Hello, Father. Peace be with you.

MATTHEW Father Greg, I'd like you to meet the Unsworth's. One of St. Mary's model families.

GREG How do you do.

MARY How do you do, Father.

LISA Hello, Father.

PHIL Good day, Father.

MATTHEW *and* PHIL, *walk away, chatting like old drinking buddies.*

MARY I'm looking forward to working with you on the housing committee, Father. We could certainly use a fresh outlook on the situation.

GREG Oh, yes, of course, you're "that" Mary. I've heard so much about your work with the committee, and the church newsletter.

MARY Yes, well, I do what I can. It keeps me busy while Lisa's at school. Will you be teaching the religion class at the school then, Father?

GREG Yes, I begin tomorrow. I'll be seeing you in class, then, I suppose, Lisa?

LISA Yes, Father.

MARY It was nice meeting you, Father. Peace be with you.

GREG Thank you. Peace be with you.

MARY *and* LISA *continue to mingle.*

MARK [*To* GREG, *indicating towards* MATTHEW *who is now with* NAOMI.] I bet I know what you're thinking. [*He laughs as he continues to mingle.*]

The CONGREGATION *continues to mingle and chat amongst themselves.*

Slow fade to black.

* * * * *

MATTHEW *is delivering his sermon as the lights come up. The* CONGREGATION *is assembled as before. It is a week later.*

GREG *enters, and remains at the back of the assembly.*

MATTHEW [*Dramatic and passionate.*] The creation of mankind only started on the sixth day, and it hasn't stopped yet. We're taller than we were a thousand years ago. We're fitter, faster, we live longer, we're better educated, more informed. Creation is an on-going process, and if we interfere with it, aren't we spitting in the face of God? If we exploit our work force, aren't we spitting in the face of God? If we kill and maim, throw people out of their homes, turn our backs on the elderly, shut

down schools and hospitals, force people to depend on U.I. or welfare, in fact, if we do anything to prevent one single human being from reaching their full potential, aren't we interfering in creation, and spitting in the face of God? That's what I believe. That's my truth. That's what made me become a priest. It's what makes me remain a priest. [*Pause. He extends his hands to the people, indicating the profession of faith.*]

CONGREGATION

[*Exiting slowly as they offer their profession of faith.*] I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

Slow fade to blues as the congregation exits.

* * * * *

MATTHEW *removes his vestments for mass as* GREG *approaches him in the rectory.*

MATTHEW Well? It's your turn to criticize me, isn't it?

GREG It wasn't a sermon, Matthew. It sounded more like a political broadcast for the socialist party. There's just sin.

MATTHEW There's social sin, and there is personal sin, and I think we should put more emphasis on the social.

GREG There's just sin, Matthew. You can't change the rules just because they don't suit you.

MATTHEW Are you judging me, Greg?

GREG For God's sake, Matthew, look at what you're doing. You know it's wrong.

MATTHEW What's wrong? [*Pause.*] What's wrong, Greg? [*Pause.*] What is it that I'm doing that's so wrong, that you find so offending and so threatening that you're compelled to judge me? What is it, Greg? [*Pause.*] Tell me, I'd really like to know.

Pause.

GREG Naomi.

MATTHEW Naomi? What does this have to do with Naomi?

GREG Everything.

Pause.

MATTHEW I was in South America for four years. In the village I was in, you had to have a woman, otherwise you were ignored. So, I got one, fast.

GREG Where is she now?

MATTHEW She's still there.

GREG She served her purpose?

MATTHEW Well, that's what you want to hear, isn't it? So, yeah, I used her. You're very certain of yourself, aren't you, Greg?

GREG Yes.

MATTHEW Well, I'm not. A few months in this parish, and you'll be a lot less certain. A few years--

GREG I've looked around at other priests--

MATTHEW A few years and you'll be completely confused. A few years more--

GREG And all those middle-aged, trendy Lefties, jumping up and down with excitement--

MATTHEW A few more years, and little bit of humility--

GREG But they're all spiritually empty. They're just... "adorning" themselves with other people's misery, fighting other people's fights. Anything to fill the emptiness they feel inside. Well, to hell with that. We're priests...

NAOMI *enters,* GREG *doesn't notice.*

GREG [*Continuing.*] ...We're not social workers, we're priests -- sacraments, reconciliation, moral guidance -- that's our job -- moral guidance. For God's sake, Matthew, moral guidance from a man with a thing on the

side?

NAOMI If you're going to judge, you should know all the facts. We love each other. He's asked me to marry him, but that means him leaving the priesthood, so I said no. And it's not because I'm a martyr to the faith, it's because one day he might regret it, and I don't want to see that look in his eyes if he does. Anything else you should know? Oh, yeah, I seduced him, he didn't seduce me. I've a few dollars stashed away, and I've got a pension coming to me, so we won't be destitute when he "pops his cloaks." Anything else you want to know, I'll be in the kitchen, washing your pots and pans, and taking a scrubbing brush to your underwear. Ok?

Just as she is about to exit, GREG catches up with her.

GREG Naomi? I'm sorry. It's just that--

NAOMI *exits.*

Pause.

GREG [*To* MATTHEW.] Can I ask you to be discreet?

MATTHEW *follows her.*

Slow fade to black.

* * * * *

GREG *enters and is immediately captivated by the cross.*

Loud, exaggerated, distorted sounds of NAOMI *and* MATTHEW *making love are heard echoing from off-stage. Their voices are perhaps augmented by* GREG's *imagination, rather than understood to be real. The sounds of* NAOMI *and* MATTHEW *continue and increasingly get louder and louder, and more and more distorted.*

GREG *takes off his collar.*

Dance music creeps in beneath the sounds of NAOMI *and* MATTHEW *and gradually takes over.* GREG, *disturbed by what he is hearing, leaves the rectory and finds*

himself in a gay bar.

GRAHAM *enters. There is a mutual acknowledgement between* GRAHAM *and* GREG. *They meet face to face.* GRAHAM *reaches out to* GREG. *They kiss. The kiss is delicate and passionate, and gradually becomes more urgent, and hungry as they fall to their knees and tear at each other's clothing.*

The music and the lights fade to black silence.

* * * * *

A few hours later, early morning at the rectory. GREG *enters the rectory and is somewhat agitated and dishevelled.* GRAHAM*'s presence/ existence still lingers in* GREG*'s mind such that* GRAHAM *is where he was at the end of the last scene.*

MATTHEW *enters.*

MATTHEW You switched the light off in the hall.

GREG Yes?

MATTHEW Yes, well, I always keep it on at night -- "At my window a little light will keep burning, All may come in, The arms of a friend are waiting."

GREG Tammy Wynette?

MATTHEW It's John 23, actually.

GRAHAM Are you a Catholic?

MATTHEW Do you want to talk?

GRAHAM It takes one to know one.

GREG No, thanks.

GRAHAM Do you want to stay?

GREG Maybe another time. I'm kind of tired.

MATTHEW Are you sure?

GRAHAM Yeah, maybe another time.

GREG Thanks, though.

MATTHEW Of course. Ok. Good-night. [*Exits.*]

GREG Good-night.

GRAHAM Good-night.
Slow fade to black.

* * * * *

A few days later. GREG *and* AMANDA *in the confessional.*

AMANDA Bless me, Father, for I have sinned, it has been two weeks since my last confession. I confess to almighty God and to you Father.

GREG [*Raising his right hand, makes the sign of the cross in the air as the lights come up.*] May the Lord be in your heart and help me confess your sins with true sorrow.

AMANDA I've been smoking, Father.

GREG Cigarettes?

AMANDA Yeah.

GREG And how many do you smoke?

AMANDA About ten.

GREG A day?

AMANDA Yeah.

GREG And how do you pay for them?

AMANDA I use my lunch money.

GREG So you don't eat?

AMANDA No, I eat. I steal Lisa's ham and cheese sandwiches.

GREG Well, that's got to stop.

AMANDA It will. She brings egg salad sandwiches now, and she knows I can't stand them.

GREG Through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins, [*Making the sign of the cross as the lights fade to black.*] in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

BILLY *enters the confessional.*

BILLY Bless me / Father, for I have sinned.

AMANDA Amen. [*Exits.*]

GREG [*Raising his right hand, makes the sign of the cross in the air as the lights come up.*] May the Lord be in your heart and help me confess your sins with true sorrow.

BILLY I tried to steal my brother's car. It's nothing really. I didn't get very far before he caught me.

GREG Suppose someone came along and stole your car.

BILLY I don't have a car.

GREG Well, suppose you did.

BILLY I'd get pissed off.

GREG Exactly. I'd get "pissed off" too.

BILLY But you don't have a car.

GREG Well, if Father Matthew's car was stolen then.

BILLY That won't get stolen though, will it?

GREG Because he's a priest?

BILLY Because it's a piece of crap.

GREG Through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins, *[Making the sign of the cross as the lights fade to black.]* in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

LISA *enters the confessional.*

LISA Bless me / Father, for I have sinned.

BILLY Amen. [*Exits.*]

GREG [*Raising his right hand, makes the sign of the cross in the air as the lights come up.*] May the Lord be in your heart and help me confess your sins with true sorrow. [*Pause.*] Is everything alright, Lisa?

LISA I'm not feeling well, Father.

GREG Oh, I see. I'm sorry to hear it. You've missed a lot of school lately. I hope you get better soon.

LISA Thank you, Father.

Pause.

GREG Is there anything you want to confess, Lisa?

LISA *shakes her head,* "No."

Pause.

GREG God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son, has reconciled the world himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins: [*Pause as he waits for her to say something. She remains silent. With his right hand raised.*] through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins, [*Making the sign of the cross.*] in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

LISA Amen.

Pause.

GREG That's it, Lisa.

Pause.

LISA He makes me do things.

GREG Who?

LISA My dad.

GREG What sort of things?

LISA All sorts.

GREG Sex?

LISA *nods,* "Yes."

GREG Does your mother know?

LISA *shakes her head,* "No."

GREG You must tell her.

LISA *shakes her head,* "No."

GREG Tell him it has to stop. Tell him you've seen me, and I said, it has to stop.

LISA *nods,* "Yes."

GREG Promise?

LISA *exits quickly without answering him.*

GREG And you'll come back and see me?

Pause, as GREG *collects himself.*

Slow fade to black.

* * * * *

A week later. GRAHAM *is sitting on a park bench, reading.* GREG *and* MARK *enter. They have just finished a workout at the gym.* GREG *is wearing his collar.*

MARK [*In the midst of a tirade.*] ...and what about this predestination stuff, and Judas, and all that, yeah? I mean, he redeemed us, didn't he? Judas did, not Christ. I mean, all Christ had to do was to go on the cross, and bang! that's it -- he's in heaven, and we all worship the ground he walks on. But poor old Judas, he's got to betray Him, then hang himself, then go down in history as a real bastard. Now that's sacrifice, you know what I mean? Where's the nobility in his defeat, I wonder. God made him, you know what I mean? He made Judas. He even made Saddam Hussein and Adolf Hitler, and that bastard, Bernardo -- God made them. Hey, now that's a bit tough on the human race, you know what I mean, thinking of it that way. But it must be worse for them, don't you think? I mean, can you imagine them lining up to be born, and God turning around and saying, "Listen, Saddam, hey, I'm sorry to have to tell you this, like, but you're going to be a tyrant. You're going to gas the kids and destroy Iraq..."

GREG *sees* GRAHAM.

MARK [*Continuing.*]...and Saddam would say, "No, sir, thanks but no thanks. I'll go to the end of the line if it's alright with you." Well, wouldn't you? Father Greg? [*Pause.*] Father Greg? Hey, something wrong?

GREG No. I mean, yes. I'm late. I've gotta run. Mark, I'll see you tomorrow at the gym?

MARK Yeah, right. Ok. Bye.

GREG *exits.*

MARK [*To* GRAHAM.] You know Father Greg, eh?

GRAHAM No. Yes. I met him...last week... at...at the gym.

MARK Harry's gym? I thought I'd seen you somewhere. Yeah, Father Greg's the new guy over at St. Mary's. He took over from that kook Father Ellerton, if you know what I mean. We all knew he was getting on, but we didn't think he was going crazy, you know what I mean. But I guess there's crazy and then there's crazy, right? It happens to a lot of them priests, you know. I mean, you hear about it all the time. Personally, I think it's the celibacy that gets them in the end, don't you?

Disinterested, GRAHAM *exits, following* GREG.

MARK Hey, where're you going? [*Calling after* GRAHAM.] It's nice meeting you. Maybe I'll catch you at the gym sometime, yeah? Hey, I didn't get your name?

MARK *exiting in the opposite direction, bewildered.*

MARK [*Off-stage.*] Hey, Bob! How are ya? Hey, wait up.

Blackout.

* * * * *

A few minutes later in St. Mary's church. "I Don't Care if the Sun Don't Shine," by Patti Page can be heard. BILLY *and* AMANDA *start giggling and goofing around to the music.* LISA *sits beside them, quietly.*

GREG Right. Ok. The session you missed last week was about relationships and love. Can anyone tell me what this song is about?

BILLY Sex?

GREG Wrong. Billy, try to remember where you are and how you are supposed to behave. Can anyone--

GRAHAM *enters.*

GREG Excuse me a moment.

GRAHAM Why didn't you tell me you were a priest?

GREG [*Quietly, to* GRAHAM.] You shouldn't have come here.

GRAHAM I came here to see you. Why did I have to find out like that? In the middle of the fu--in the middle of the street?

GREG I couldn't that night. I didn't know how to tell you. Look, this isn't a very good time for--

GRAHAM Are we going to see each other again? [*Pause. Takes out a piece of*

paper and pencil, writes down his number.] Look, here's my number. Phone me. Take it. Please. Call me.

GREG *takes the piece of paper and places it between the pages of his prayer book.*

GRAHAM *exits.*

GREG [*To the students.*] Ok, where were we?

BILLY Sex?

GREG The song, right. Can either of you give me a more sensible answer?

AMANDA It's about relationships.

GREG Yes, right. Absolutely. It's about relationships. What's the most essential part of a relationship? What do we need?

AMANDA Love?

GREG Absolutely right. Love. Passionate commitment from one human being to another. Can you give me an example of this kind of a relationship, Amanda?

AMANDA My mom and dad.

GREG Good. Another one? [LISA *shudders and falls to the floor in an epileptic seizure.*] Lisa?

GREG It's alright, Lisa. It's ok. It's ok. It's alright. [*To* AMANDA.] Phone Mrs. Unsworth. Now!

AMANDA *exits.*

GREG [*To* LISA.] Ok. Ok, Lisa. [*Gathering her in his arms and gently rocking her.*] Shhhhh. Shhhhh. Everything's / going to be ok. Relax...

BILLY Father Greg?

GREG *dismisses* BILLY *with a nod, and* BILLY *exits.*

GREG That's it, Lisa. relax. You're going to be alright. Shhhh. You're ok, now. Everything's ok. What has that man done to you? Shhhh. Shhhh.

GREG *continues to hold* LISA *in his arms, rocking her gently. She gradually calms down, and begins to relax. The relaxation gives way to tears which evolve into quiet sobs. After a few minutes her sobs gradually subside.*

LISA I...I don't blackout... like I'm supposed to...I remember everything...and it's...it's always...the same...kinda like a dream world or something...a place that I just...end up in...somehow... and he's...he's...always there...I mean it's all black...and I can't see anything...but he's there...somewhere in the darkness...I don't know how I know that he's there he just is and I try to run away but I can't move...it's weird 'cause other times...sometimes I can move...and I run and...and all I can think of is Hide! Hide! Now!...and then it...then it just gets worse...and it feels...like I'm underwater and it's dark... even darker than before...and I'm near the bottom...way down deep...near the bottom and everything is in slow motion or something but I still feel as though he's there...in the black water...and I can't work my way through the water to get away...'cause I'm not strong enough...and the water is like thick-wet-cement or something...and if I look up...up through the water... I can see a faint light...it's blue...and I think...if I-could-only-get to that blue light everything would be ok and I begin to feel like I can breathe again but sometimes...it's like...I don't want to get to the light...like I don't want to come up for air...I just want to stay there... and let him catch me 'cause then...I mean...if he did catch me it would be all over...wouldn't it? I would be dead... right?

GREG Lisa, I want to help you, but you have to let me help you. Can I have your permission to talk to your mother about what you told me in confession?

LISA No.

GREG Is there anyone else you'd like me to talk to?

LISA No.

GREG You must come and see me again.

LISA *nods her head slightly.*

GREG You promise? Look at me. Look at me. Promise.

MARY *enters urgently, followed closely by* PHIL.

MARY Hello, Chicken.

PHIL Everything alright?

MARY Thanks very much for your help, Father.

PHIL Hello, Father.

GREG Hello. You're welcome, Mary.

PHIL Hey, you ok?

GREG How long has she been having seizures?

LISA Yeah.

MARY For a few months now, I guess.

PHIL What brought it on?

GREG I had no idea. Is there anything that can be done?

LISA I don't know.

MARY It could be an adolescent thing, you know. Apparently it happens to kids her age.

PHIL Are you alright now?

LISA Yeah.

PHIL Are you sure?

LISA Yeah.

PHIL That's my girl.

MARY Well, we best get you home to bed. Thanks again, Father Greg, for all you help. God bless you.

GREG God bless you. Take care, Lisa, and I'll see you soon, right?

LISA Thank you, Father.

GREG If they're getting more frequent, maybe you shouldn't leave her on her own.

MARY Oh, we don't. If I'm not with her, Phil is. Goodbye, Father.

MARY *and* LISA *exit.*

PHIL Goodbye, Father.

GREG It has to stop.

PHIL *exits.*

Pause.

The lights dim. There is an indiscernible eeriness. GREG *is sleeping.*

LISA *enters.*

LISA He makes me do things.

GRAHAM I came here to see you.

MATTHEW Are you judging me?

PHIL That's my girl.

NAOMI We love each other.

MARY It could be an adolescent thing.

LISA My dad.

MATTHEW *enters.*

MATTHEW When I was in South America, you had to have a woman.

GRAHAM *enters.*

GRAHAM Are we going to see each other again?

MARY *enters.*

MARY Apparently it happens to kids her age.

NAOMI *enters.*

NAOMI If you're going to judge, you should know all the facts.

PHIL *enters.*

PHIL Hey, you ok?

ELLERTON *enters.*

ELLERTON Nobility, even in defeat.

LISA He makes me do all sorts of things.

MARY If I'm not with her, Phil is.

MATTHEW That's what made me become a priest.

NAOMI I seduced him, he didn't seduce me.

PHIL What brought it on?

GRAHAM Are you a Catholic?

Pause.

Their voices begin to overlap until they are speaking all at once, building in momentum and intensity.

NAOMI He makes me do things.
LISA I came here to see you.
GRAHAM That's my girl.
MARY Are you judging me?
PHIL We love each other.
MATTHEW It could be an adolescent thing.
GRAHAM My dad.
NAOMI Apparently it happens to kids her age.
ELLERTON When I was in South America you had to have a woman.
MATTHEW Hey, you ok?
MARY Are we going to see each other again?
LISA Nobility, even in defeat.
PHIL If you're going to judge, you should know all the facts.
ALL I came here to see you.

MATTHEW That's my girl.
NAOMI My dad.
MARY He makes me do things.
LISA We love each other.
GRAHAM Nobility, even in defeat.
PHIL It could be an adolescent thing.
ELLERTON Are you judging me?
LISA I seduced him he didn't seduce me.
NAOMI He makes me do all sorts of things.
MATTHEW If I'm not with her, Phil is.
MARY What brought it on?
GRAHAM That's my girl.
PHIL Are we going to see each other again?
MATTHEW Greg, are you alright?

Isolated from the other voices.

LISA Incest is human. It's the most natural thing in the world.

Waking up, a primal scream erupts from GREG.

Blackout.

* * * * *

A week later. GREG *is in the confessional, waiting.* PHIL *enters.*

PHIL Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.

GREG [*Raising his hand, making the sign of the cross.*] May the Lord be in your heart and help me confess your sins with true sorrow.

PHIL What did she say?

GREG I can't tell you that.

PHIL She's my daughter.

GREG I can't break the seal of confession. You know that.

PHIL A man once paid 24 thousand pieces of silver for the right to commit incest. Do you know who sold him that right? Pope Alexander the

Sixth.

GREG Incest is evil.

PHIL Incest is human. It's the most natural thing in the world.

GREG The most unnatural. It's got to stop. She's having seizures because of what you're doing.

PHIL I see. Of course, you're the expert, aren't you, Father. Never been with a woman, let alone fathered a child, but you're the bloody expert. You ask any man, any real man, and you ask him when does he stop patting his daughter's bum. When she's twelve? When she's fourteen? And why does he stop patting it? Because she doesn't like it? Because he doesn't like it? Or, because he does like it, but then where's it going to stop? I've dedicated my life to the study of incest, and there's nothing anyone can tell me about it -- least of all you, Father.

GREG I can tell you it's a sin. One of the gravest sins of all. Can I have your permission to talk to someone about this--

PHIL Keep your nose out of my business--

GREG There's help available, and therapy.

PHIL I don't need help. I don't need therapy. I'm not your textbook case. I'm no sexual inadequate. I've just seen through all the bullshit, that's all. Inhuman, is it? Unthinkable? So why go to all the trouble of making laws against it? Why does every society in the world put a taboo on it? I'll tell you why. It's the one thing we'd all like to do. Deep down. In here.

GREG And does Lisa like it?

PHIL *storms off stage.*

Pause.

MATTHEW *enters.*

MATTHEW Greg? Are you alright?

GREG What? Oh. Matthew.

MATTHEW Are you alright?

GREG Yes. No. No, actually. I'm not. [*Pause.*] I can't go into detail. It's just that if I intervene, I could stop someone's suffering, but that means--

MATTHEW ...breaking the seal of confession. Yeah, I know what you're going through.

GREG They used to ask us a question, when I was in the seminary. It was sort of a standard question. "If a man tells you in confession that he's poisoned the altar wine, do you still go out and say mass?"Now, I've no problem with that. I would go out and say mass, and drink the wine. I suppose there is a bit of the martyr in all of us.

MATTHEW "The holy sacrament of penance was instituted by Christ the Lord so that the faithful who have fallen back into sin after baptism may be restored to God's grace. Required in the minister of this sacrament are goodness, knowledge, and prudence. Moreover, he is obligated by the seal of a secret confession to strictest perpetual silence regarding it."

GREG But when it's not you that's suffering, when it's someone else, and you know that you could stop their suffering and pain by just speaking out -- but you can't because it's against the rules. How can I just sit and do nothing, when I know I could put an end to someone's suffering? Surely that's not what God had intended? What would you do, Matthew?

MATTHEW I would drop a hint. [*Exits.*]

A phone is heard ringing off-stage. The ringing stops and MARY *enters.*

GREG Good evening, Mary. It's Father Greg calling.

MARY Oh, hello, Father. What can I do for you?

GREG I wanted to speak to you about Lisa.

MARY Lisa?

GREG Yes, I saw her at school this afternoon, and she didn't look very well.

MARY It's these fits, Father. They get her down. Thanks again for your help last week.

GREG You're more than welcome, Mary. Do you think it's the seizures, or do you think there might be something else?

MARY I don't know, Father. What else could it be? Oh, wait, there is something else. There is a big lump of a bully at school who's been stealing Lisa's lunch. Perhaps it's that, Father?

GREG Yes. Perhaps, it's that. May I speak with Lisa for a moment?

MARY Oh, sorry, she's out with her dad. He took the night off, so I think they went to a movie or something.

GREG I see.

MARY Well, thank you for calling. See you at the meeting on Thursday. By the way, did you get a new cartridge for the printer? I've got all those housing action sheets to do? [*Pause.*] Father Greg?

GREG What? Oh, yes, the cartridge, it's here.

MARY Great, thanks. Well, goodbye, Father.

GREG Right. Goodbye, Mary.

MARY Bye. [*Exits.*]

A phone rings off-stage. It stops ringing and MARK enters.

MARK Hello. Social Services.... Social Services....Hello? Can I help you?...

GREG I'm calling about a child at risk.

MARK Yes?...I'm listening....Hello?....Can you give me some information about the child the situation so that we can help?....Hello?...

GREG No.

MARK Is there anything you can tell me?

GREG No.

MARK *exits.*

Pause.

GREG *flips through his prayer book for paper with* GRAHAM's *number.*

Pause. Transition to a few hours later. GREG is sitting on the bench in the park.

GRAHAM *enters.*

GRAHAM You look like hell. Is everything ok?

GREG He wasn't human enough, the son of God. He had certainty, heaven, everlasting life. He know it all with absolute certainty. Well, give me that, and fine, no problem, you can crucify me as well. Give me all the agonies of the world, no problem whatsoever, because I'd be absolutely certain that God exists. But I'm not absolutely certain. All I've got is faith, and when something evil comes along -- grinning, sickening evil -- faith just runs away in terror.

Pause.

GRAHAM I love you.

Pause.

GRAHAM *exits.*

Slow fade to black.

* * * * *

GREG, *presiding at mass the following Sunday.*

GREG The peace of the Lord be with you always.

The CONGREGATION, *including* MARY, LISA, PHIL, NAOMI, BILLY, AMANDA, MARK, BOB, *and* PATRICK, *enters.* GRAHAM *remains at the back of the assembly.* MATTHEW *is assisting the service.*

CONGREGATION
[*As they enter.*] And also with you.

GREG [*Breaking a host over the paten.*] May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it. [*He genuflects, takes a host, and raises it over the paten.*] This is the

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Happy are those who are called to his supper. May the body of Christ bring me to everlasting life. [*He reverently consumes the body of Christ, then takes up the chalice.*] May the blood of Christ bring me to everlasting life. [*He reverently drinks the blood of Christ. He takes a paten to the people of the* CONGREGATION, *who now form a line in front of him, and he takes a host for each person. For each communicant, he raises the host.*] Body of Christ.

EACH COMMUNICANT
Amen.

GRAHAM *is last in line to receive communion.* GREG *is silent.* GRAHAM *sticks out his tongue to receive the host.* GREG *does not move.*

The CONGREGATION *dissolves and exits, as* ELLERTON *enters.* GREG *and* GRAHAM *remain transfixed.*

ELLERTON And you couldn't give him communion?

GREG [*His eyes still fixed on* GRAHAM.] No.

ELLERTON I never denied anyone communion. They had more right to receive it, than I had to give it.

The spell breaks. GRAHAM *steps back away from* GREG, *perhaps smugly, and exits.*

MATTHEW *steps forward.*

MATTHEW Who was he?

GREG I've no idea.

Pause. MATTHEW *exits.*

Blackout.

A couple of days later. GREG *is visiting* ELLERTON *in the country.*

GREG [*To* ELLERTON.] Have you always been celibate?

ELLERTON I'm not proud of it. It's a gift from God. He gave me the gift of celibacy, He gave you the gift of certainty of vocation. Two completely different

gifts.

GREG I want both.

ELLERTON Now, that's being greedy.

GREG I sit in my room, sweating. I turn to Him for help. [*Indicating the cross,* GRAHAM *is there.*] I see a naked man, utterly desirable. I turn to Him for help and He just makes it worse. Now, up there in my room, that's my Gethsemani -- my garden, my Mount of Olives -- up there, I understand it all -- the saliva, the racing pulse, the adrenaline, the ecstasy before the fall. And Matthew -- what I should say is, "Matthew, I can't smile and hug and preach the beauty of creation, because inside here, there is just sin and sickness and evil and --" Oh, God!

ELLERTON I was going to get out, Greg, when I was your age. But it would have broken my mother's heart. So, I waited. By the time she died, it was too late. There was nothing else I could do. Then, the Bishop says to me, "It's time. It's time to move on." Get out now, Greg, while you still have your health and your strength. Love who you want, when you want. Get out now, Greg.

GREG I can't get out. God wants me to be a priest. I don't just think it. I don't just believe it. I know it.

Pause.

ELLERTON I'll pray for you, son. [*Exits.*]

Slow fade to black.

* * * * *

A week later in the church.

MARY The focus of the article is that housing isn't the answer on its own. There's a whole load of other stuff. I mean, jobs for a start. You can't put these people in a house with hot and cold water and say, "There you go, have a good life." It's about values. It's about changing attitudes. And changing attitudes takes a bit of money, and it takes education, better education, health care... Father Greg?

GREG How's Lisa?

MARY Well, she's fine. She's with her dad. As I was saying, after your article, I'll put in the report on the last housing committee meeting. That should do it for this month's newsletter. Was there anything else you wanted in it, Father?

GREG Oh, no. I think that will be fine, Mary. Thank you.

MARY Alright then, I'll be off. I should get this to the printers before they close. Thank you, Father. Good-bye. [*Exits.*]

A pause before the ensuing explosion.

GREG Do something! Don't just hang there, you smug idle bastard! Do something! I'm going to tell someone. That's what you would do. She's a fourteen year old girl. You wouldn't see her suffer. You'd say, "This girl is me. This girl is all humanity. For this I came." You wouldn't give a damn about the church, and its rules and its regulations. The secrecy of confession, how can that be good when it allows evil to thrive. You'd speak out. You would speak out. I know you'd speak out. *[He collapses to his knees in prayer.]* "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name..."

As GREG *prays:* LISA *enters.* PHIL *enters.* LISA *walks slowly, not necessarily trying to avoid* PHIL, *but to some extent trying to maintain a distance.* PHIL *reaches out to* LISA. *She finds herself resigning to the inevitable. With complete indifference she takes off her sweater as they both exit.*

GREG [*Continuing.*] Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For ever and ever. Amen. [*Pause.*] You could speak out. You were the son of God, for God's sake. You could make the rules. You were the son of God, I'm not. I'm just a priest. I'm just a priest, and I can't take on two thousand years of history. That would be pride. That would be arrogance. They'd crucify me. [*Pause.*] Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For ever and ever. Amen. [*Pause.*] I look around for an example, and all there is, is you. But you performed miracles. You

changed water into wine. You raised the dead. You cured the sick. What kind of example is that? How could you possibly know despair? "Oh, well, I'm feeling a bit low today, I think I'll raise somebody from the dead." How could you, with that kind of power, know what I'm going through right now? [*Pause.*] Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name...

GREG *continues praying softly but urgently as* MARY *enters. He repeats the prayer, increasing in volume and fervour, and should finish by the time* MARY *re-appears.*

MARY [*As she enters.*] Li-sa? I'm home early, Chicken. I thought we could make some cookies. Lisa? [*Seeing them off-stage.*] What are you doing? What are you doing, Phil? What are you doing? [MARY *begins to physically attack* PHIL.] What are you doing, what are you doing, what are you doing, what are you doing what are you doing you animal you animal you animal you animal you animal. You animal! You animal! Oh, God. Oh, God. Oh, God. You're an animal. You're an animal. Get out. Get out. Get out of my house. Get out. Get out. Get out.

PHIL *manages to escape.*

MARY [*To* LISA.] I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. [*To* GREG.] You knew. You knew and you did nothing. What kind of man are you? I hope you burn in hell.

MARY *and* LISA *exit.*

Pause.

GRAHAM *enters.* GREG *goes to him. They embrace.*

Blackout.

* * * * *

Later that night. A police radio is heard.

GRAHAM [*Off-stage.*] Shit.

GREG [*Off-stage.*] Oh, God.

PHIL *enters with a newspaper "Gay Priest Guilty: Not in Front of the Altar Boys,*

Father." The radio and flashing lights fade.

JUDGE It is charged that on the seventh day of October, you violated section 159 of the criminal code. Do you understand the charges that have been brought against you? How do you plead?

PHIL *exits, and spot light comes up on* GREG *on the cross platform.*

GREG Guilty.

Lights come up on the BISHOP, PATRICK *and* MARK.

BISHOP Compassion, gentlemen--

PATRICK What are you going to do about it?

MARK How long have they been lovers?

PATRICK Is he going to leave the priesthood?

BISHOP When you sin, you go to a priest, and you expect compassion.

MARK Your Excellency, what is going to be done about this?

PATRICK What does he have to say for himself?

BISHOP If you expect compassion from him, shouldn't he expect it from you? [*Exits.*]

PATRICK [*Exiting.*] How could you let this happen?

MARK [*Exiting.*] It's a disgrace to our faith...to the church.

* * * * *

A few hours later. MATTHEW, NAOMI *and* GREG *are in the rectory.*

MATTHEW Why didn't you tell me?

GREG I tried. I couldn't. Did you see this morning's paper? "Gay Priest Guilty: Not in Front of the Altar Boys, Father." What are you going to do?

MATTHEW We'll say mass together. We'll quote John, Chapter 8; "Let he who is without sin, cast the first stone."

GREG I can't do that.

MATTHEW We've got to do it.

GREG No, I can't. Look, I really appreciate it, Matthew, but I can't.

NAOMI Greg, why not?

MATTHEW You've got to do it.

GREG But what about the Bishop?

MATTHEW Oh, fuck the Bishop. Don't take that literally.

The BISHOP *enters, and sits in the confessional.* GREG *goes to him.*

BISHOP What's Matthew been saying?

GREG He's been very supportive. He thinks being gay has made me a good priest -- human, compassionate. He thinks that all that's happened recently has made me a better one. More human. More compassionate.

BISHOP Go out and commit mass murder, and he'll want you canonized. Am I to understand that you wish to carry on serving God?

GREG Yes, Your Excellency.

BISHOP The best way for you to serve God is to disappear. The best way for you to serve God is to piss off out of my diocese. Is that clear?

GREG Yes.

BISHOP Good. I'll make arrangements for you to be transferred to Father Augustus's parish. Hopefully, it will be quiet enough out there for you to stay out of trouble. Do I make myself understood?

GREG Yes, Your Excellency.

The BISHOP *exits.*

GREG *switches back to real time.* MATTHEW *gives* GREG *a look.*

GREG What do you want me to do -- disobey the Bishop? Come on, Matthew, be realistic. He's banished me to the wilderness like some pathetic scapegoat, taking the sins of every homosexual with me.

MATTHEW But it's our parish, Greg.

GREG I won't be your cause, Matthew. I won't be your crusade.

MATTHEW Is that how you see it? Look, Greg, you've broken the vow of celibacy, that's all--

GREG Bullshit--

MATTHEW So, you should demand to be treated the same as any other priest -- heterosexual or homosexual, it doesn't make any difference.

GREG It doesn't make any difference? That's bullshit and you know it, Matthew.

MATTHEW You've broken a man-made rule, that's all.

GREG Christ was celibate. Christ was celibate. Look, Matthew, the Church gives us everything -- money, food, shelter, respect, and all she asks in return is celibacy. Christ gave his life. All we're asked for is celibacy, and we can't even manage that.

MATTHEW Christ didn't ask us to be celibate. It's man-made, it's a man-made--

GREG Solemn vows. "Do you solemnly swear." That's our currency, Matthew, solemn vows, and we debase them because we can't even stick to them ourselves.

GREG Look, Matthew, I appreciate what you're trying to do. But I can't. I just can't. It just doesn't matter, anymore.

NAOMI Doesn't matter? Of course it matters, Greg.

MATTHEW Greg, look, everything's going to be--

GREG No, Matthew, you don't understand--

MATTHEW Yes, I do--

GREG No. You don't.

MATTHEW Greg, I--

GREG I...I just...

MATTHEW Greg?

GREG I've just...finished off...finished off a whole bottle of sleeping pills.

MATTHEW Oh, God. Greg, no!

NAOMI Jesus Christ, Greg! [*Exits quickly.*]

Blackout.

* * * * *

The following day. MATTHEW *and the* BISHOP *enter.*

MATTHEW Good news. He's going to be ok.

BISHOP That's good news?

MATTHEW They're going to keep him in the hospital for a few more days for observation, and--

BISHOP Fine. After that, I want him out of my sight. Is that understood?

MATTHEW Yes, Your Excellency.

The BISHOP *exits.*

Blackout.

* * * * *

In the country parish church, a few days later.

FATHER AUGUSTUS *is kneeling in prayer. His demeanour exudes that of a stereotypical orthodox priest.* GREG *enters.*

AUGUSTUS [*Praying.*] Ad Deum Patrem omnipotentem, qui vult omnes homines salvos fieri et ad agritionemn veritatis venire, tota mentis nostrae, fratres carissimi, dirigatur oratio. ut eam Dominus custodire et fovere dignaetur, Dominum deprecemur. [*Crossing himself.*] Praesta, aeterne omnipotens Deus. Amen.

With much effort, AUGUSTUS, *finally acknowledges* GREG*'s presence.*

AUGUSTUS Dominus tecum.

GREG [*His Latin is rusty, but he makes an effort.*] Et cum spiritu tuo.

AUGUSTUS Totadie pluit.

GREG Yes. The rain. Depressing.

AUGUSTUS Scie te penitus. Tu es pustula in corpore Christi. Pustula vivens, spirans, in colossa. Iamiamque in pus et cruorem et foetorem et erupturum.

GREG I'm afraid you've lost me.

AUGUSTUS I said, I know all about you. You're a boil on the body of Christ. A monstrous, living, breathing boil, ready to erupt at any moment into pus and blood and stench.

GREG I think I preferred it in Latin.

AUGUSTUS You will be paid one dollar for every mass you say, and you are not to go out after dark.

GREG Fine.

AUGUSTUS [*Praying.*] Unde et memores, Domine, nos servi tui, sed et plebs tua sancta, eiusdem Christi, Filii tui, Domini nostri, tam beatae passionis, necnon et ab inferis resurrectionis, sed et caelos gloriosae ascensionis...

Slow fade to blackout.

* * * * *

Two weeks later. GREG *and* MATTHEW *in the rectory of the country parish, finishing off the last half of a bottle of scotch.*

MATTHEW I thought you could probably use a drink by now.

GREG Thank you, Matthew.

AUGUSTUS *enters, then turns and exits.*

MATTHEW So, what's he like?

GREG Oh, he's a little more orthodox than you, Matthew, mind you just about anyone--

MATTHEW Yeah, yeah, yeah. Cheers.

GREG Cheers. And, thanks for coming to see me. As for my keeper, he's about a day older than God and insists on speaking in Latin.

MATTHEW You can't be serious? This is worse than I thought.

AUGUSTUS [*Entering.*] I want this door left open.

MATTHEW I beg your pardon?

AUGUSTUS *exits.*

GREG Matthew, he's chaperoning us.

MATTHEW I don't believe it.

They both burst into uncontrollable laughter, which turns into them faking having sex, for Augustus' benefit.

MATTHEW Give it to me big boy.

GREG Was it good for you?

Their laughter gradually subsides after a few minutes.

MATTHEW So, how are you, really?

GREG Nothing an entire bottle of prozac wouldn't cure.

Pause.

MATTHEW What's his name?

Pause.

GREG Graham.

MATTHEW Do you love him?

GREG I despise him. "Satan comes in many forms."

MATTHEW Listen to what you're saying, Greg. This is the man that gave you his body. How dare you talk like that. In the name of God, Greg, you've got to ask yourself -- No, look at me, look at me when I'm talking to you. To call another human being "Satan," what kind of religion is that? What kind of sick twisted brain-wash have you been through? His sole purpose in life is to tempt you into sin, is that what you're saying? You're Christ, and he's the bloody serpent? Is that what you're saying, you arrogant prick?

GRAHAM *enters.*

GREG I told him that I don't think it's a good idea that we see each other again. [*To* GRAHAM, *in a flood of emotion.*] I can't do this anymore. It's wrong.

GRAHAM It's wrong? According to who? To what? Your precious church and its rules? Is it wrong for you, or just wrong for you the priest? [*Pause.*] Christ, Greg, grow up.

GREG What do you want me to--

GRAHAM What we have is beautiful. It's society, and your almighty God that make it ugly. [*Pause.*] You shouldn't have started something you can't finish.

GREG I know. I'm sorry. There were risks and there were consequences, I know, but there was, there was also a need. I'm sorry. I'm sorry if I've--

GRAHAM How can something that feels so right, be wrong? [*Pause.*] Greg? How can it be wrong? How can it be wrong to love?

GREG I don't know. It just is. [*Pause. While holding the moment with* GRAHAM, *he resume his conversation with* MATTHEW.] I think I love him.

GRAHAM [*As he recedes and exits.*] God bless you.

MATTHEW Do you want him?

GREG Yes.

MATTHEW All the time?

GREG A lot of the time.

MATTHEW And is that sinful?

GREG No. It's sick.

MATTHEW So, to itch for a man is "sick." To want to scratch that itch, to want to make love to another man, that's sinful?

GREG Yes.

MATTHEW And to want to go on scratching, to live with another man, well, that's permanent sin. That's evil. That gets into that "me He curs'ed" stuff, right?

GREG Yes.

MATTHEW Is there any sense, any intellect, any common humanity in that kind of bullshit?

GREG *laughs to himself.*

MATTHEW What are you laughing at? Are you laughing at me?

GREG Yes.

MATTHEW Don't patronize me, Greg.

GREG I, patronize you? I live it, Matthew. You think you can just spout some glib Socialist Reader crap, and bang, all's right with my world, I'm reconciled to my nature, cue the uplifting music? Who's the arrogant

prick now?

Pause.

MATTHEW I want you to say mass with me.

GREG I can't.

MATTHEW You owe it to the congregation -- to confront, to challenge, to teach. I bet you Sitting Bull wouldn't hide himself away. "Nobility, even in defeat."

GREG I just can't say mass with you, Matthew. Everything has changed. Can't you see that?

MATTHEW What I see and what you see are two totally different things, and until you, not me--

GREG Matthew--

MATTHEW No, listen to me, until you see things as they are, you'll stay out here, getting a dollar for every mass you say and not being allowed to go out after dark. When are you going to grow up, Greg? When are you going to realize that you can't be that idealistic priest you want to be until you start facing some truths about yourself. How long are you going to deny who you are underneath those pristine vestments of yours? It's about being true to yourself, Greg, and it's about time you were, don't you think?

* * * * *

GREG *delivers his sermon in the country parish, as* MATTHEW *delivers his at St. Mary's. They are each in their own separate worlds.*

GREG Nice word, scapegoat.

MATTHEW Do you think God gives a damn?

GREG The word, scapegoat, dates back to an old Jewish custom.

MATTHEW What with war, famine, disaster, millions slaughtering each other--

GREG The people in the village would invest all the sins of the tribe into a goat, and kick it up the back side so that it escaped into the hills, taking all the sins with it.

MATTHEW With all of these things on his mind, do you really think God gives a damn about what men do with their dicks?

GREG In ancient Greece, human scapegoats were used to mitigate a plague or some other calamity.

MATTHEW Have you ever doubted the existence of God? I have.

GREG Today's scapegoat is a bit different.

MATTHEW It's not war, famine and disaster that make me doubt him. These things make me angry, but they don't make me doubt his existence.

GREG It's that mythical beast called society.

MATTHEW When I look at the Church today, and see careerists, and hypocrites, and pharisees thriving in positions of power, that's when I begin to doubt the existence of God.

GREG Drug addiction.

MATTHEW How could He let this happen?

GREG Alcoholism.

MATTHEW Some put pomp and circumstance, the cap and gown, before the principle itself.

GREG Gambling.

MATTHEW That's what we're doing now -- the churches, cathedrals, bishops, popes, and all the trappings of power.

GREG Prostitution.

MATTHEW We care more about that than the thing itself -- the teachings of Christ.

GREG Violence.

MATTHEW Love and compassion for all mankind. For all mankind. Men. Women. Black. White. Old. Young.

GREG [*Quietly.*] Homosexuality.

MATTHEW Gay. Straight.

Pause.

GREG Well, I don't understand why we insist on placing all these sins on society, as a whole. What about the individual? Individual responsibility? If you forget about the individual...aren't you spitting in the face of God? We can talk about spitting in the face of God by exploiting the work force, throwing people out of their homes, turning our back on the elderly, shutting down schools and hospitals, forcing people to depend on U.I. or welfare, but isn't this, in a sense, a betrayal? -- society's betrayal of the individual? The point is, if anyone does anything to prevent one individual from reaching his or her full potential, isn't that interfering in creation, and spitting in the face of God? What's most important not to overlook is the individual's betrayal to himself and to his own personal truths. That's what I believe. That's my truth. It's what makes me...remain...a priest.

[*To* AUGUSTUS.] Ave et futue te ipsum sordide senex. Go and look that one up, you old bastard.

GREG *and* MATTHEW

Let us offer our Lord Jesus Christ the profession of our faith. "I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord..."

Slow fade to black.

* * * * *

A few days later. GREG *enters.* MARY *enters from an opposite entrance.*

GREG Can I see Lisa, please?

LISA *enters, behind* MARY.

MARY No.

GREG Lisa, I'm so sorry.

MARY I'm closing the door now--

GREG Please, forgive me--

MARY I'm closing the door now--

GREG Lisa, forgive me.

MARY I don't want to close it in your face, but I will if I have to. Will you go?

GREG Forgive me.

MARY *spits in his face.*

Blackout.

* * * * *

The following Sunday Mass, St. Mary's church. The CONGREGATION *is assembled, including* BILLY, AMANDA, MARK, BOB, PATRICK, NAOMI, LISA, *and* MARY. MATTHEW *presides over the general intercession.*

MARK Charles and Ruth asked for our prayers for their son John, who is in hospital after a car accident. And Katie Bull, asks for our continuing prayers for her husband, Kevin. [*Pause.*] For these people, and all who are ill and suffering, we ask God's help, as we remember them in our prayers. Lord, hear us.

CONGREGATION *and* MATTHEW
Lord, graciously hear us.

MATTHEW You've forgotten somebody.

MARK Father?

MATTHEW Father Greg, who needs our support and understanding.

MARK Yes. Sorry. Lord, hear us.

CONGREGATION *and* MATTHEW
Lord, graciously hear us.

MATTHEW [*At the altar, takes the paten and the bread and holds it slightly above the altar.*] Blessed are you, Lord, God of creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has--

GREG *enters, dressed in the vestments for mass. There are ripples of agitation in the* CONGREGATION *as* GREG *cautiously takes his place beside* MATTHEW, *who welcomes him with an embrace.*

MATTHEW As you can see, Father Greg, has joined us. Blessed are you, Lord, God of creation--

BOB I'm sorry, Father but this is out of order. This is definitely out of order.

MATTHEW Sit down, please. Will you please sit down.

GREG [*Quietly.*] I'm here to ask for your acceptance.

MATTHEW Why? Why is it out of order?

BOB Why? Because this is a joke. You're making a laughing stock of my faith you know that? Come on, Billy. Hey, you, come on, we're getting out of here. Get moving.

MATTHEW Will you tell me why?

BOB Oh, for God's sake, Father. You shouldn't need telling should you? [*To* BILLY.] Come on, let's get out of here.

MATTHEW If you don't like it, if you can't give this man compassion, then go. If you object to this man's presence--

BOB But it's in the bible.

MATTHEW The bible?

BOB Do you read the bible, you? You pervert. It's there in black and white -- "You shall not lie with a man as with a woman: that is an abomination."

MATTHEW We're all sinners. All of us. That's why Christ went to the cross.

GREG "In my Father's house, there are many mansions."

BOB "And it rained fire and sulphur from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and--"

GREG "Let he, who is without sin among you cast the first stone."

BOB "Take my statutes and my laws, and do none of these abominations."

GREG "Judge not that you may not be judged."

MARY How dare you. How dare you come back here. Haven't you caused enough pain? [*Exits, taking* LISA *with her.*]

MATTHEW If you're too conservative in your thinking. If you're too conservative in your hearts--

PATRICK You know what they Holy Father says about it. I don't supposed you listen to the Pope either, do you?

GREG "Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times? Jesus answered him, "I did not say seven times. I said seventy times seven."

MATTHEW Who was the first to see Him when He was risen? Mary Magdalene. A prostitute.

MARK "And Jesus wept."

MATTHEW How dare you turn your back on this man. How dare you do this, and call yourselves Catholics. If you are so adamant about judging him, why haven't you judged me all these years? Why? Ask yourselves that question. You have no right to make this man your scapegoat. That's what you're doing if you reject him -- you're asking him to take on your sins, your inability to forgive, your inability to show compassion. If you're too conservative in your thinking, if you're too conservative in your hearts, I don't want you here. Go.

Pause. LISA *re-enters and takes her seat.* MARY, *having followed* LISA, *stays in the wings.* BILLY *takes his seat, followed by* MARK, PATRICK, *and reluctantly*, BOB.

MATTHEW *and* GREG *(sotto voce)*

[*Raising the chalice high above the altar, holding the host over the chalice.*] Through Him, with Him, in Him. In the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, almighty Father. For ever and ever.

MARY *exits, weeping.*

CONGREGATION, MATTHEW *and* GREG

Amen.

MATTHEW [*Breaking the host, and putting a piece in the chalice.*] May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.

GREG *steps forward to receive communion from* MATTHEW.

MATTHEW Body of Christ.

GREG Amen.

MATTHEW Blood of Christ.

GREG Amen.

MATTHEW [*Facing the people, genuflects, takes the host, raises it slightly.*] This is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Happy are those who are called to his supper.

They each take a paten and face the people of the CONGREGATION. *The* CONGREGATION *begins to line up to receive communion. Everyone lines up in front of* MATTHEW.

LISA *enters and makes her way through the line up, toward* GREG. *He is close to breaking down. There is a pause as she, alone, stands before him.*

GREG Body of Christ.

LISA Amen.

GREG *places the host in her mouth.*

GREG *breaks down.* LISA *envelops him in her arms.*

MATTHEW *offers communion to each of the communicants in front of him.*

MATTHEW [*For each communicant.*] Body of Christ.

EACH COMMUNICANT
Amen.

Slow fade to black.

Curtain.

APPENDIX B

An Interview between the Author and Jimmy McGovern

(Liverpool, England, Harry Ramsden's Restaurant:

February 16, 1997)

AN INTERVIEW WITH JIMMY McGOVERN

Bell: I have lots of questions, and I don't exactly know where to start. How did *Priest* begin?

McGovern: I had scored a hit with a thing called *Needles*, about kids. And so I was a wee bit hot at the BBC, and I said I wanted to do this thing called *Priest*. Now, prior to that I had been working on a soap opera, and making quite a fair amount of regular money. But I had stopped working on the soap opera, and I had no money, so I started writing *Priest* for the BBC and my only source of income was this commission to write *Priest*. It was originally commissioned as a ten part TV drama series, and each section would be a Commandment. So the first one is "Thou shalt not have false Gods before me," and so on and so on. They couldn't fund that, the BBC, so then it became a series around a Christian theme. And that fell apart. So, eventually, it became a four part drama series - featuring this heterosexual priest, and only one tiny strand about this homosexual priest. I then wrote, properly the through-lines, the first acts, the treatments - I wrote the four parts. It landed on the desk of the big boss of the BBC, and it was never made. It cost me a fortune, because I turned down a feature film and everything to do this thing called *Priest*. Anyway, then I got it down to about an hour and a half as a feature film I was writing for Channel Four. Because by this time the homosexual priest was featuring very prominently, and that is Channel Four stuff. But then the BBC came back to me and said, "Can you get this down to feature film length," I said, "I've already done it." So it was actually done as a feature film. But there is a sting in the tale, because it became a sexy feature film, not a big feature, I'm never going to make a great deal of money, but it's going to make a healthy profit... Anyway, that sort of explains that four act structure, because it was always to be a four part TV series.

B: I had it figured out to be three -- so up to the arrest was one, going out to the country was two, and the reconciliation was three.

M: It works in the adaptation in that form.

B: But the fourth?

M: I say it was a four act structure because it was to be four segments. That long stay in the country parish and all that was not conventional filming, it's not conventional filmic structure anyway. Not that film. To hell with that [conventional filmic structure].

B: It's interesting that you said you were going to make it according to the Ten

Commandments - back in October or something, the director and I were talking about parallelling it with the 14 Stations of the Cross.

M: I thought of that structure as well.

B: I couldn't believe the response to the play last weekend. So, I think that definitely, there is a call for it, it does fulfill something. There are things that are said in it that are very important that people need to hear.

M: Yes, I agree. You know, all that kind of fading in and all kinds of voices and all that, it works on stage, does it?

B: The nightmare was really interesting, and the director made it disgusting and distorted. Because we were able to tweak all the last segments of the lines having to do with Lisa, and the way it was staged, it became very grotesque and Lisa was actually seducing her father. And the other characters were all forcing Greg to look at Lisa. "If I'm not with her, Phil is," and all that. So, it got really distorted, because you don't want to think that Lisa is tempting her father, at all. Her last line being "incest is human, it's the most natural thing in the world". No, it worked really well, and I got a lot of comments on that too.

M: Yes, that's very clever. I've got one tiny complaint. In the film, I'll go and on about this, and I'll bore you with this. It's not seen in the film, everybody fails to see how important it is. But, in the film, it's Greg's weakness - you know how at the end he is stripped of everything, he's just a man. In the film, it's his weakness, which aborts that big debate they're having about housing. It's because he can't cope with the problem with Lisa, and his sexuality, and it all gets on top of him - because he can't handle it, and he's so weak, means he aborts that meeting. And because he aborts that meeting she [Mary] goes home early. And as he's praying for this, as he prays to God for a miracle, he doesn't realize that his own weakness as a man has brought the miracle. If it had been Father Matthew, he would have been able to cope. He would have seen that meeting through to the end. And the woman would have gone home at the time she was supposed to and it [the incest] would not be discovered. It's his [Greg's] basic weakness that brings about the miracle. It's not strength or anything, it's weakness. And that's not in the adaptation, but then, having said that, nobody sees in the film anyway. And I don't know if I put that in intentionally or if that's my reading of the film afterwards, or whether that's hindsight.

B: It's funny because that moment, a lot of people I've talked to interpreted it, or got the sense from the film that he told her to go home at that moment. But in my mind it's not coincidence, he calls the meeting short. I don't know if I actually got the sense that he was aware of what actually might happen if she did go home early.

M: Oh, but he's not. No, he's absolutely unaware.

B: I think it came out in the playing though. Because he pisses her off and she leaves. But the weakness -- it's funny that you should mention that, because the actor that we had playing Greg, did a fabulous job, but he found it very difficult to play the vulnerability, and to find that "weak man" state. And probably isn't in the script, but I think you can find it. A lot of people commented on the Greg/Graham relationship - "Where does it come from?"

M: It's a weakness in the film, that [the Greg/Graham relationship]. Antonia Bird [Director], did a smashing job on the film. But in my script, in the original script, I kept on thinking that this is a man who cannot come to terms with his sexuality. In the film, however, he finds that gay bar very easily. In the film he finds the gay bar extremely easily, and also, the sex is gloriously free. Now that to me, is not the repressed homosexual man. That's a man quite at ease with his sexuality. So, I think that's a flaw in the film really. Either he is a repressed homosexual or he's not. You cannot have both. And so, I'm not surprised that you found that difficult as well.

B: So, were you on set, when they were filming?

M: Hardly ever, really. I was so busy doing other things, I would just pop up now and again. What you do is you show your face and you say "Everything is wonderful, I think you're all doing a great job", and then leave again. Because Antonia's not that kind of director anyway. She's queen of the shoot.

B: So, other than that, were you pleased with the film, and how it turned out?

M: I was. I found at times it a wee bit overblown. Heightened. If I'd made the film it wouldn't have been anywhere near as popular. It would have been much more brutal. Much darker, and much more accurate, I'd say. What helps the film, because it's quite a brutal film, is those two guys fall in love. In my script it was never love. And she found it. I mean for instance, in that scene when he's on his bike, and along comes Graham in the car, and shit hits the fan everywhere and he's [Greg is] so down, and then he gets into Graham's car and they have sex and the "copper" comes - it wasn't even Graham [in my script]. Greg goes to Graham's flat, finds another man there, goes off, walks into a public toilet and there's a policeman there, but he doesn't know it's a policeman obviously - it happens a lot in this country, not everywhere, but you get these coppers hanging around trying to catch gay men. So he has sex with this man, who afterwards flashes his ID card, and it's that, that leads to the scandal. Antonia found the love story, so I had to re-write that bit to fit in with Antonia's discovery of a homosexual love story, which was never there in the first place.

B: Well, that certainly changes it, doesn't it.

M: Changes it massively, yes. And then all the gay men - it was first shown in Edinburgh, and all the gay men were there, and they wanted to "own" the film, as a gay film. And that central love story, I think, makes it a gay film. I was arguing that it's not a gay film, this is a Catholic film.

B: I think Canadian gay men embrace it as well, as a gay film. You had to comply with Antonia on that decision?

M: I think that by the time I found out, it was too late. And so I had to change it, then, because, as you know, when a film is shot, it's what's shot that is important, not what's written out. And they'd been shooting this love story, so I had to change it. But it made the film acceptable. It's not the film I wrote. The film I wrote wouldn't have made any money whatsoever. And also, really, they're only having sex in a car. It's not a huge scandal really, whereas if it's in a toilet, a public toilet, and with a policeman, it's more of a scandal. It's not a crime is it [sex in a car]? Why is he arrested?

B: Public indecency, or something.

M: In a public place, that's it. Yes. As in the film, I suppose. He's in a car, in the open. There was also an awful lot of stuff that was short and sharp [in the original script] that Antonia embellished a wee bit. I'm not, it sounds as though I'm hammering her, I'm not, I think she did a great job, and she made the film live and breathe. She made it watchable. But the home visits in the film, they were just snatches, bang-bang-bang, staccato, almost montage, staccato-montage. And she spent quite a wee bit of time there. And when Phil's wife actually finds out, she walks into the room - in my script it was: [camera] on her, a drawer opening, a knife spilling out, a hand grabbing the knife, wham, and away. But in the film, it was explored a lot more, and I'm not sure it works. I think it takes us into almost a melodrama, at that point.

B: So what happens to Phil afterwards? He got stabbed? The police came?

M: No, in the script, in the scene after that, he's in prison, and Greg comes to visit him. Actually in the script, there was a wonderful scene, when he's actually in the prison, and these guys come in, and they're going to kill him. They say, "kill the beast, kill the beast, kill the beast," all that stuff. These people want to hammer him because he represents the very evil that's inside them. So the more they hammer him, the more they're hammering the beast inside. As he gets hammered by these guys, he just refuses to lie down and he takes it. And then the next scene is, he's in prison, and along comes Greg to visit him. And he shows Greg his cuts and bruises, and then he says, "Have you heard from my wife?", and Greg says "No." And he says, "You will do, I've told her everything." And then she storms in the door. There's a good scene to be written about Phil. In a strange way he could be a martyr as well. He stands for truth, but it's the most unpalatable truth in the world.

B: One of the most interesting comments I got was from an incest survivor. She said that in all of her healing process, she had never ever heard what Phil says in confession. That side of the argument as completely foreign to her. It's all denial, denial, denial, and then he comes out with his confession.

M: Did she say it was false?

B: No, it was just one side of the argument she had never heard of.

M: I did an awful lot of reading into it. It needs to be answered, that kind of argument. If it's perceived as the most unnatural thing in the world, why is there an accommodation made for it in every society in the world, ie. taboos and laws. Because, it actually is quite natural, as human beings, compared to incest in the animal kingdom. It's a human thing.

B: I didn't know what to do with Phil afterwards.

M: It would be quite easy to have him as a sex offender who actually believes in it - it's much more interesting a character than [a man who'd say] "Sorry."

B: Or someone who you see as a very affectionate, loving father. That's even more gross.

M: It works in there [the adaptation] extremely well, that - "this is a model family."

B: I was pushing it a bit, I think.

* * * * *

B: So what made you switch, because you wrote for the theatre as well, what made you switch over to TV and film?

M: I think it was because of regional theatre, it's absolute shite in this country. There's no such thing as regional theatre anymore. And all the people in the theatre, over here, this is a class ridden society and I'm a working class male, and the theatre in this country is not for working class males, or working class females. It's very class ridden. And it doesn't stop on the stage. The whole structure. It's amazing, for instance, there would only be a quarter of an hour interval, now a quarter of an hour interval is fine if you drinking scotch and rye, but it's no good whatsoever if you drink a pint of bitter. I'm mean, that sounds like an insignificant point, but it's huge. The whole culture of going to the theatre in this country is bourgeois. I just found that I met some really objectionable people, horrible people. And I was treated like shit. And I was new, and I didn't understand theatre. I didn't

understand the rules of theatre, and I didn't understand the rules of being in a room with actors rehearsing your piece. I didn't know that you don't speak to the actors you speak to the director -- all those rules of etiquette. And it took me a long time to find that out, somebody should have told me. But they don't. They just assume.

B: Do they have workshops for the plays? How do new scripts get developed, in terms of your theatre scripts and film scripts? Is there a workshopping process?

M: No, there wasn't. No it's normally: you write a play, send it to the theatre, and you never get a response anyway. Occasionally, they might respond, and usually, it's "no." Once in a million, they will accept a new play, and then, as far as I'm aware even now, it's simply rehearsed, and then produced.

B: So the script is the way it is and that's it?

M: No, it changes during rehearsal. Obviously, it changes. As I was then, I was constantly over-writing. The first I play I wrote took over 4 hours. Even when I cut the bloody thing, it only came down to 3. It was huge. Those are things you have to learn as well - timing. Even people my age, the first we see of drama is cartoons, and I think that stays with us. As a screenwriter now, I constantly run these films in my mind. No matter how experienced we become, I still see that, cartoon-like, at cartoon speed. The time on screen for someone to walk from here to that wall and back, is enormous. But when you run it through your mind, it doesn't seem that long. I think that because of that, we tend to overwrite. We do not accommodate the physical reality of what we actually do in the space available. We just see the piece of film in our mind at cartoon speed. I was thinking that in theatre. I thought people could talk and act the scene out at the speed that I was reading it. And that is totally wrong. But you tend to learn.

B: So you find it easier to write for the screen and TV than the for stage.

M: Yes, definitely. More rewarding as well. And nicer people. I'm not criticizing you, but in British theatre.

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B: Someone made the comment that film can be so panoramic in scope and a play can't be, so I have to try to narrow it down and narrow it down.

M: I saw the same fault. In the film, I used to breathe a sigh of relief as soon as he went to that gay club. The film, for me, really starts there. I think the same applies there [in the adaptation] except it's a wee bit shorter. But I kind of blame Antonia for that. I

think she dwelt at great length on the first quarter of an hour, twenty minutes. But in the script, even in that script [the adaptation], the script comes alive, as soon as his homosexuality is revealed.

B: That's one of the things I wanted to talk to you abou:, you say it's not Greg's first time, going out to that gay bar.

M: In the script it was his first time, in my mind it was his first time. But even in the film, he did find it [the gay club] so easily, I know, it's a problem. But I know, here, it's such a small city, that everybody knows which gay bar is which. Well, anybody his age would. I wouldn't necessarily know now, because the scene has all changed. But I can still go into a gay bar and feel very uncomfortable - "of course, everybody knows that's a gay bar." That's a funny thing about a man on his own walking into a bar. So, I think, off-screen, I can justify that. That he's been here for a while, and he's heard people talk about bars. I don't think it's such a problem, that, but the comfort he feels, how comfortable he feels with Graham.

B: Yes, I did get the sense that it was his first time. I think he's covering up so much too, like in the film, when he's in that bar, he's really trying to hold himself together, and trying not to be scared.

M: And the guy who plays Graham in the film, is so comfortable. He's a good actor that guy, Graham [Robert Carlyle]. I thought Linus Roache [Greg] was wonderful, because, I watched that film, so often, there is no attempt to curry favour with the English audience whatsoever, he plays it like an English prig, so well. You know, so up-tight. I thought it was a really, marvellous performance. A lot of people talk about Matthew, played by Tom Wilkinson. Nice guy, but that was such an easier part.

B: But he has an interesting journey, though too. Just in terms of the final scene and the one out in the country - his journey culminates out there.

M: I was thinking about that as well. I wanted a couple of scenes where they're actually walking through the woods, they have that argument that's in the script. I think it works in the script much better than in the film. The argument I had, was in the film, the film should be the argument - you had to have an argument about what you see in the film. Seems that's where the film has failed, because the audience has to be reminded of the issues. I think it works wonderfully well in the theatre. But in film, that walk in the woods, where "Christ was celibate," and all that, I wanted to cut all that - but she wouldn't let me.

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M: Would you make any changes to that [the script] now then?

B: I do have a lot of changes to make. I'm going to move the scene when Greg goes to Mary's door and put it before be leaves for the country instead of when he returns.

M: It's a hasty re-write for that scene, in the film, you know when he knocks on the door, "Please forgive me." Antonia told me, "But we haven't seen this girl, and yet she comes in at the very end of the film, you better to remind the audience of it." It's essential, I agree.

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B: If any theatres want to do this, or any offers of publication come--

M: Oh, do what ever you want with it. I've got no objection to anything like that. Whatever you want to do with it, that's fine by me. If it goes on to make a bloody fortune, I want something.Talk to my agent, because you've got my blessing.

B: Thank you.

M: I'll definitely fly over to Canada, if it is ever staged again. I'll get there. Maybe I'll sail. I can take the QE2 to New York.

B: Why don't we just do it in New York, how's that.

M: Could you do it over here, if there is money available?

B: If there was money available, sure.

M: What would all that take, to get them all over here? It would be a hell of an event, wouldn't it.

B: Most definitely. I'll see what I can do.

M: I'm flattered and honoured that it was actually staged in Canada.

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M: I noticed that in these comments [audience response sheets], a lot say, "too many blackouts", and I think you'll always be faced with that problem in adapting. It's just difficult. Again, it's the physical reality of it, because in your head you always see a very

fluid, short-lived blackout. In reality you are sitting there, cringing, waiting for the next scene. There must be ways around that.

B: I think in the next draft a lot of them won't be there, except the key ones. Otherwise there will be indications of transitions - "transition into 2 weeks later." They are definitely something that needs to be addressed in the next draft.

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B: So what does Greg think about being a priest? What does it mean to him?

M: It's a tough one, that. I think he's utterly convinced that he's got the calling for the priesthood. As a Catholic boy, if you're a Catholic boy, and you show any kind of fascination with the faith, this even happened to me, and I'm not exactly a practicing Catholic, at all. I've got massive reservations about the Catholic faith, although it started me culturally. I am the product of my faith. But you are asked at a certain age, if you have the calling for the priesthood, in this country anyway, and you tend to be asked at about age 8 and 14, and I think he [Greg] probably said yes. In the old days, you were taken away from your home and you trained to be a priest. That's not the case now. But I'm utterly convinced that he [Greg] was convinced that he had his calling to the priesthood. But because of the laws of the priesthood, you know, you have to be celibate, and the situation in the '80's and '90's has changed so radically, according to homosexuality and sex. More and more now, those people who are joining the priesthood are gay, and they're not only gay, but because of the mixture of the Catholic faith and conservative politics, they are gay men who despise their sexuality. They've not come to terms with their sexuality. And I think Greg is one of them, and he hoped by joining the priesthood, he could somehow wear that as a cross, to make him a better priest, and he is the kind of priest -- I met this priest, and that's a story...it was always going to be a heterosexual story, and then I met this gay man, not far from here actually, who is a priest. I interviewed loads of priests, and everybody said, "you should meet this guy." And I met him in this very orthodox place called, well, I can't tell you where, because he hasn't "come out". But in a very orthodox church, a church renowned, a place of worship renowned for its orthodoxy. And he took me up to this room, and it was a very small room, and the only place to sit was on his bed. I've been homophobic all my life, not because I'm evil in nature, but because of my class, my culture. And even though I think I am a much better man now, because I am a white liberal, but I still have vestiges of that. And I'm uneasy, I'm not uneasy to talk to a homosexual man in the normal course of events, but I felt uneasy to talking him, sitting on his bed in his room with the door shut, and I have to accept that, confess that. But he poured his heart out. And it was after talking to him, the whole film changed and it became about Greg. Because to tell the story, to tell Father Matthew's story is so easy, but to tell Greg's story is much more difficult and challenging. And, as a

Catholic human being, you are brought up, one of the first things you learn about Catholicism is the word Catholic means universal. And you accept that. And that is why the old mass in Latin is so awe-inspiring, because you knew, on a Sunday, you were saying the mass in Latin, whilst all over the world Catholics were saying the same mass at the same time. It's that universality of the Catholic faith. And yet when you consider that there is no room in this supposedly universal church for a gay man and a wonderful priest.

B: So a lot of the struggles Greg faces stem from this priest that you met??

M: I actually stole an idea for the film, when he talks about "That's my Gethsemani." What this priest said to me was, "Do I put the collar on go to the parish club or do I take it off and go cruising?" And that's his Gethsemani. There is a kind of saying that goes along with this. You how, if we accept that all human beings are made by God, then if you're gay it's a kind of accident. And here's a man that accepts that God made Greg, but he made Greg gay, so therefore, God made Greg on a Friday afternoon -- Greg is the product of God's Friday afternoon, a Friday afternoon human being, and all gay men. It's hard to square that God made Greg as well, other than that God had an off-day when he made Greg.

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B: Do you ever feel like you want to go back and fix things in the film?

M: Yes, I do. But it's not quite the problem with the script, it's the fact that the lines are being misinterpreted, or the actor's not quite good enough. But you can do an awful lot in the editing. I never trust an actor by what they can do on the screen, because so much magic can be woven in the editing.

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B: *Priest* was filmed in Liverpool?

M: Yes, apart from the stuff inside the church. We got no cooperation from the church. The main objection to the film was, that at the moment of consecration, you know when Greg holds up the host, "This is my body," and all that, I had an awful lot of explicit flash backs, sex, and stuff, and that was the main objection by the church. This thing [consecration] that was so crucial to the Catholic faith, was being used in conjunction with sexual intercourse, sexual flashbacks. I spoke to a priest, a wonderful brave priest in Northern Ireland, a guy called Father Pat, he's a wonderful brave, outspoken Catholic

priest, and I was going on about holding up the host and all that, and how it's quite sexual, you know, changing body, blood. He, this is one of the most intelligent, brave priests, I've ever known in my life, and he'd never seen that [the sexuality in the consecration]. And I got this letter about 4 weeks after I spoke to him about *Priest*, and the sexual nature of that ritual, and he said "I hate you, I can't get my head off it now." I trust him, implicitly, and he had never seen that.

B: I think it is quite clear in the film.

M: It's a much more explicit scene in the script.

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M: It's an appalling piece of editing, the final scene. You know all that stuff. You know when they start to challenge Father Matthew, and he says "if you can't give this man compassion, then leave," -- I had to write that, because the argument was that the honest Catholic would not leave, they'd actually just sit there and say nothing. So, they had to be challenged to leave, then they would leave. It simply extended that scene, and it's untidy. It's badly, really badly edited.

B: We found that with Matthew saying that, "if you don't have compassion for this man, then leave," the people who we thought would leave, left, and there wasn't anyone left on stage. So we had to tweak Matthew and get him to say something so that they wouldn't leave because we couldn't afford to lose the actors, we needed them there. And it was really interesting the way it worked, because each character took their time, when Matthew says "if you're so quick to judge him, why haven't you judged me?" They all looked to his girlfriend, and then one by one, they took their time in terms of sitting back down. They sat there very quietly.

M: Is there anybody who leaves then?

B: Mary does leave. In the earlier drafts, I didn't even have her in the last scene. And when we had the read-through, the woman who was reading the part of Mary, said, "Why isn't Mary there?" Could she go back? Even if she didn't know Greg was going to be back. When she shut the door, "don't make me shut it in your face, Father", is more than just "don't make me shut the door on you," but it's also, "don't make me shut the door on my faith." So, would she go back, if not, where is she? And where is Phil, can Phil come back? I don't think Phil can come back in the last scene.

M: He's in prison.

B: Exactly.

M: It's a good scene with Phil inside the prison, but it takes us away from the story, in a way. It becomes the story of a sex offender, in a way. So I'm not surprised it was cut. I'll do it again one day, though. I think it would be fascinating to write Phil's story in prison.

B: He's so easy to hate. So, I think that if it is played opposite to that, it's quite shocking.

M: A good challenge for a man though. It would have to be a man's story -- how men react to Phil. I think women hate him, by right.

B: So you did research on sex offenders, and you found someone who said something like "I've dedicated my life to the study of incest"?

M: I never actually found that kind of man.

B: Please tell me that kind of man doesn't exist.

M: He probably doesn't. But it's stuff you find out about in the actual research, it's absolutely incredible.

B: I think that is the line that at the end of the film, I couldn't believe it - "did he really say that?"

M: But there probably is that kind of man, but they justify themselves really well. And I just researched everything to do with incest. It's a fascinating topic. It really is. I still might do it as a four part drama series. About a family, and that actually happens to a family.

B: It could so easily be Lisa's story. And I think that a lot of people really connect to Lisa. I guess the addition of the monologue drew people in that direction more. I just wanted to give her more of a voice for some reason.

M: That's very good, that, it works well in the theatre. I know in film if you've got extremely young actors, you're much better off giving them very little to do. And you've kept the scene in the film, the confessional scene. That worked well in the film.

B: Yes, and it's pretty arresting too, in the film. No one breathed in the theatre. Because you've got Billy and Amanda, "yeah, I tried to steal a car", "Yeah, I've been smoking", and then boom.

M: And how did you do that, did you have to use blackouts for that?

B: Yes, they were sort of melt-downs and then back up again, and their lines were overlapped. Trying to capture the mundane, "this is my job, this is what I have to do, I have to listen to these ridiculous things," and then he gets hit with this. The whole concept of the seal of confession, what would have been expected of him, in that situation? Would he have gone straight to the Bishop, what would the protocol be, if he's in that situation. Matthew says, "I would drop a hint."

M: Yes, but that's not surprising though. I spoke to one priest, and he was quite radical, and he said I would have picked up the phone and phoned social services immediately. But he was the only priest who said that. I went to see this priest in this an old working class community. An absolutely wonderful old priest. Anyway, I put this situation to him, and honestly, without a word of a lie, he just went ashen, and I could tell he was going through exactly the same thing. All he would say is "It's a big problem," that's all he would say. I said, "Well, what do you do?" "It's a big problem." He just wouldn't say how he handled it.

B: They must get that all the time. And worse. It doesn't make any sense, that it doesn't go any further. And if they can't do anything, and as Greg says, "how can that be right?"

M: And if it did go further, you wouldn't have found Lisa in there [in confession]. If Lisa knew that it could go further, she would never have gone. It's only because she trusted the seal of confession that she goes in the first place. If she knew [that it could go further than Greg], it'd be like talking to a neighbour, she wouldn't have been there.

B: She is just bursting, and it's got to a point where she just has to tell someone, and she tells him. So that when he says "you have to tell your mother," and "you have to tell him to stop"...You don't think I've said that? And she actually walks out on him, out of the confession. And it's one of those things when you actually confide in someone and they can't do anything, and that probably crushes you more than what brings you to say it. There is that fragility in Lisa. "Yes, I am coming to you, and you can't help me? And if you can't help me, then what is there?"

M: But then you have to ask, what did she want when she went in there? Because she only went in there because she knew he couldn't help her. She knew he wouldn't do anything. He's not going to pick up he phone, she knows he's not going to pick up the phone. Maybe she wants a miracle or something, I don't know what she wants. But she desperately needs to talk to somebody.

B: Maybe it's just getting it out, and knowing that it is safe with him. Because there is some comfort in that.

M: If that man [Greg] had been in any position to help her, then she wouldn't have told him. And the only way he can help is by listening. The only thing he does say is "Tell him you've told me, and I said it's got to stop." That's the only thing he can say really.

B: But even then, that's not what she wants to hear.

M: No, but it's crucial for the play. Because if she hasn't told the Father, if she hasn't told Father Greg, there are no confrontations.

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APPENDIX C

Kathleen Flaherty's Critique of the Production Draft

(Seminar Room, Department of Drama, University of Alberta;

February 12, 1997)

A CRITIQUE OF THE PRODUCTION DRAFT

Kathleen Flaherty:

What I look for in a script: i)Does it work structurally? ii) Through-lines and, iii) Character development.

Overall the strengths of the script include the rhythms, even though the director did not always find them. There was a strong handling of moments which show in the translation. And it was a transparent production, such that the flaws and the strengths of the script showed.

In terms of the scene structure, you need transitions for the short scenes to melt into other scenes. In film, transitions are often provided with music, but that is not how it works on the stage. Therefore, it has to take a further step away from the source and find what works for the stage. The blackouts, I found, often decreased the emotional intensity.

What was missing in the text was a sense of visual imagery, apart from the ceremonial aspect. It was present in Lisa's monologue, but nowhere else. Do the drowning images and the fractured light from Lisa's monologue, parallel at all with Greg? There needs to be an image pattern throughout, apart from the ceremonial/ritualistic words. In the theatre the words need to do more to create a level of imagery.

Concerning aspects of the story line and the structure, I found that Graham's story gets lost. He says "I love you," too soon. The importance of his character is lost because we don't see enough of him. Therefore, the significance of Greg refusing him the wafer is lost as well. He feeds into Greg's character, so he is important in revealing at what level is Greg getting involved/ not getting involved with him.

I have a major question: What is Greg's dilemma? Is it revealed in the second "scapegoat" sermon in the argument between individual vs. social responsibility? The first time he says this sermon, it is not clear why he is going there? Or does his dilemma have to do with confession and celibacy? How did he get to where he got to? What is his through-line? How does he get to the individual responsibility sermon? If we blame everything on society, what about children - do they have responsibility? If we blame everything on the individual, we have Ayn Rand. Is Matthew a balance of both? Or is he purely on the side of society?

Why was Father Ellerton kicked out?

In terms of the ending, you might not want the answers, which allows for the post-play journey - the journey is not over when the play ends.

The drunk scene worked well. So did the nightmare scene.

Returning back to Greg's through-line, where is he coming from in the first place? Going out and getting laid - was it his first time?

The issue of the seal of confession, and "strictest perpetual silence" connects to the individual responsibility vs. societal responsibility. At what point does Greg question his beliefs? At what point is Greg rebelling against his beliefs.

Father Matthew clearly represents the liberation theological tradition with his emphasis on the social.

Getting back to the second "scapegoat" sermon - it needs to justify Greg's decision to come back, and it needs to be clearly related. The audience needs to know what he learned and how he got there. What effect did the time spent in the wilderness incur? What is he struggling with exactly?

In terms of free will - it lies solely in the realm of individual responsibility, and permits sin to exist. In terms of society, where is free will? In society, other forces than right and wrong are at work.

What does it mean to be a priest for Greg? Was he living by the book and then was suddenly faced with life? There doesn't seem to be any room for his humanity.

Because there wasn't essentially any design for the show, you were forced to rely on design solutions for the transitions and the visual imagery. Accomplish this with the words so you don't have to rely on design solutions.

What was most important thing about the film for Jimmy McGovern?

APPENDIX D

Audience Response to *Priest*

AUDIENCE RESPONSE TO *Priest*

N.B. The following is a compilation of the written responses from the three performances and the dress rehearsal.

What questions do you have about the play? About the issues and arguments in the play?

Interesting arguments were brought up against acting too blindly from either the heart or by the book. Was there a "middle ground" strove for from which a person might be most effective?

It's okay to be human but does this mean that it is okay for priests to sleep with others? Granted priests are human... but.

Raised a lot of good issues, but one remaining concern was the breaking of confidential information and vows. I guess a rule as opposed to substance.

Why did the director make the last scene so short? It was the most crucial part of the play and I believe would have been more effective if the scene had been longer, with more lines and a bit slower pace (as in the movie).

I thought it was a good and interesting play. Initially, I thought it might have too many different themes, but they were all pulled together.

All clear. Very clearly presented dilemmas and points of view.

In terms of character development, was it clear? What wasn't clear?

For crying out loud, what/when did Greg and Graham do/fall in love? We don't see them do anything but have sex. The visual (the beach walk) did it in the movie.

The compassion and lack of compassion was well portrayed and you understood what and where the characters were coming from. The only thing that I found a bit blurry was what happened to Father Ellerton at the start. But that just might be me!

Lisa was well realized but could shake less. I have worked with abused teenage girls and

recognized her despair but it doesn't have to be extreme really. Jessica did a beautiful job of Lisa's unreal stillness and her sense of betrayal. A Fabulous speech after the seizure. "I love you" by Graham - too fast.

Greg and Matthew's developing friendship shown very well. Lisa's path in forgiving Greg Shown very well. Greg's acceptance of himself shown very well. Excellent in every way.

The character development was well done. Each character built their path to their own personal climax. Truly touching.

Main characters were developed well. The lives of the people within Father Greg's congregation from the point of view of Father Matthew would illustrate his understanding of the people he's been serving for five years.

Great job Father Matthew. This character is very amicable and translates well to stage. Also loved the character Mark.

I wish I could have seen the relationship between the young girl and the priest developed stronger before the end. But everything else was wonderful.

Good play! (Thought Greg could have handled Lisa better in his priest role.) Good development of Greg! Tied together well at the end.

I wanted clarification on the strength and development of the relationship between Greg and Graham. Also, the relationship with the children. Also, what happened to Phil? How was Greg "found out"?

Father Greg's homosexuality seemed to just appear out of the blue (if that's what you wanted that's O.K. too). Lisa was well portrayed as a child suffering immensely inside. Bravo.

Very well done. It was clear.

I did not get a clear understanding of why Ellerton had to leave the church.

The relationship between Greg and Graham developed VERY abruptly. The only scenes we saw between then were of a sexual nature - I felt that there was a scene missing - their first meeting perhaps - before the bar scene. I loved he image of Graham in front of the cross and the repetition of Greg's "scapegoat" sermon intermingled with Matthew's sermon.

There needs to be interaction/dialogue between Greg and Graham early on in the play, to explain why Graham puts so much emotional commitment into the relationship despite

Greg's denial of him. Perhaps more scenes with Father Matthew.

Greg's hatred of himself is clear, and his reasoning too.

Do you have any questions or comments about the structure of the play?

Super, telephone conversations great. Confessional done well. Go further away from the movie. Otherwise it's just the movie with blackouts and that's really annoying.

Very good. It flowed well. Kept interested.

The only real complaint I have is the sometimes choppiness of the scenes. The quick lighting changes made it difficult to maintain concentration, on occasion, but they weren't long enough to relax. It's a heavy play and it's long to go without really being able to breathe. Mostly though, while it took some getting used to, the structure was wonderful, well done and used the space well.

The number of scenes became awkward with blackouts chosen as scene changes.

A few awkward transitions.

With too many themes, no single one is developed properly. *Priest* has handled this problem well. Themes ranging from scapegoats to the virtues of the Catholic Religion are all explored satisfactorily within the play.

I really enjoyed the split scenes involving Father Matthew, Greg and Graham. They were very effective in conveying a lot of information and the mixed emotions Greg felt.

I loved it done in a round theatre. I felt more involved and that was great. The beginning was a little slow. I thought the main issue was going to be the about the priest's affair with the housekeeper. It threw me for a loop at first, but the parallelism was good.

5159 Criminal code - I don't think homosexuality is illegal - so didn't know what it was.

How necessary are the blackouts? This seemed to break the momentum and journey of the play for me.

I liked the sparseness and theatricality of the scenes - no clutter with "stuff."

Did well to keep the set very simple. Helped focus more on the story.

What exactly happened to Lisa's father? It almost seemed like he got off scott free.

An excellent adaptation of the movie.

Too much unresolved conflict moving too slowly to resolution.

I thought the "fits" by Lisa were not particularly convincing - how else could her state be shown?

I felt that the issue of Greg's relationship with Graham was overshadowed too much by the plot of Lisa and her abuse.

I like the multiple time scenes, and the scene in which characters said each others lines.

Enjoyed the round; were times I couldn't see. Nightmare scene great.

What, if anything, confused you about the script?

"Why?" That's what confuses me. Why take this film and put it on stage *unless* you're going to do something that cries out for live theatre.

Nothing that I didn't figure out for myself.

Even as a non-Christian, the ideas, issues, and dilemmas were clear and left the audience with their own thoughts and questions.

Unaware that *Priest* was based on a movie, I would say that the script was well performed.

The blackouts slowed down the pace of the play a lot, and sometimes the transitions in time were confusing; ie. how much time passes between Greg's arrest and his meeting with the Bishop?

I was only confused when the priests were practising their sermon, I wasn't sure if they were practising or actually doing it for real.

The only aspect missing was what the priest was charged with.

Very strong script.

Nothing - I'd seen the movie very recently, excellent.

Gets more excellent. Good job. Congratulations to the playwright and director.

"Why does God care what men do with their dicks?" If a man rapes a girl, it's ok? What about Phil? Was that ok?

Other comments:

Great job!

Be an adaptation, not a poor imitation (or even a good one).

Amazing, I have a totally different perspective on my heritage now. Thank you.

It was an excellent production (but I didn't know there'd be a quiz) p.s. didn't see the movie.

Excellent acting, directing, and production. Great job!

I loved the way the theatre space was used. I thought the scream/nightmare scenes were very effective. Gripping, original and tear-jerking. Wow!

Father Greg's dream sequence with the transition of lines among characters was well done. Perhaps a better breakup of sound allowing the different characters "solos" might be tried.

Good show!

Absolutely wonderful. Out of the three plays I have seen this week (*Pentecost*, *7 Stories*, and *The School for Scandal*) this was by far the best.

Very good. Excellent casting choices.

Excellent acting, especially Lisa. I enjoyed it (and agreed with Matthew). Glad no full nudity or too graphic of scenes.

I expected the chairs to be used more - why are they or aren't they occupied? Could the congregation actually sit in the audience?

I don't have much to say except that I truly enjoyed the performance. Very intense with nice amounts of comic relief. I enjoyed it thoroughly. Lots to think about.

This is the only play that has moved me to tears. Congratulations.

The blackouts were a problem - for me, they interfered too much with the flow of the script and the theatricality of each scene. I liked the minimalization in terms of design -

I think this contributed to the play in a positive way. I'd hate to see someone clutter it up in the (mistaken) movie of "design."

It makes it easy when all is known in the confessional and one doesn't have to operate on half truths.

Too many blackouts?

Lighting, sound effects, stage movements and adaptations to movie, e.g. scene of two drunk priests being supervised by old priest, excellent. An excellent production, considering so many of the actors/actresses were/are so young (I know some are professional actors).

Excellent production. Just the right length. Touched on all emotions.

Very good, I enjoyed it very much.

Amazing!!!! Great directing, great acting, wow!

The play didn't start to really impact me until the latter part of Lisa's "seizure monologue." I was in tears often after this point. I think this is a very important play.

I really appreciated the development of Matthew's character and his relationship to Greg. A very smooth and believable progression.

Great adaptation and production. Very emotionally involving.

Very moving. Very convincing performances.

Didn't like the scream/laugh? at the end. Good show.

Incredibly well done.

One of the best plays I've ever seen. Covers timely pertinent issues. Show it.